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THE BACKGROUND  
OF  
MARATHA RENAISSANCE  
IN THE 17TH CENTURY

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS AND  
POLITICAL MOVEMENTS OF THE MARATHAS

BY

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## FOREWORD

1. These lectures were delivered by me under the auspices of the Nagpur University from 17th to 22nd December in the year 1934, being selected as the 'Rao Bahadur Bapurao Dada Kinkhede Lecturer' for that year. The subject chosen by me for these lectures was "The Background of Maratha Renaissance in the 17th Century".

2. I am very much thankful to Rao Bahadur M. B. Kinkhede, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Nagpur, who endowed this lectureship in memory of his father who was a distinguished scholar, advocate and public leader of Nagpur. I am also grateful to the Hon'ble Sir Justice M. B. Niyogi, M.A., LL.D., C.I.E., the then Vice-Chancellor of the University. Both the gentlemen believed in my scholarship and I tried my best to justify their selection.

3. Marathi is invariably used by me as the medium of expression and the delay in submitting a press-copy of these lectures to the University was due to my natural unwillingness to resort to a foreign language for expression of thought. I crave the indulgence of the Maratha public at large for this lapse as they have always encouraged and appreciated my humble efforts for the search of truth in the past.

4. There is no uniformity in spelling of proper nouns in India—of both persons and places, in the writings of different scholars. I have added my own quota to this diversity. But a non-Englishman need not much worry about it as long as he makes himself understood.

5. My son Prabhakar N. Behere, M.A., LL.B., Research Scholar, Nagpur University, made many valuable suggestions while reading these lectures for the press.

6. This great World war has delayed the publication of these lectures considerably.

CONGRESS NAGAR, }  
NAGPUR }  
1st June 1946. }

N. K. BEHERE.



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ज्ञानदेवै रचिला पाया । रचियेलें देवालय ॥  
नामा त्याचा किंकर । तेणें केला हा विस्वार ॥  
जनार्दनी एकनाथ । ध्वज उभारी भागवत ॥  
भजन करा सावकाश । तुका झालासे कलस ॥

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## PROLOGUE

THIS is not a text-book on the history of the Marathas. It is only an attempt to interpret the phenomenal rise of the Marathas in the first half of the 17th century by reference to their traditions in the past. It is an attempt to present a picture of the background of Maratha renaissance in the early part of the 17th century. It is, in fact, a historical survey of the social, religious and political growth of the Marathas from ancient times. Unless one probes sufficiently deep in the ancient hazy past, he will not be able to explain satisfactorily why the Marathas succeeded in establishing an independent Hindu Raj against all odds in the 17th century while the heroic efforts of the Rajputs under the born leadership of the great Rana Pratap Sinha failed in the previous century. The Marathas undoubtedly called themselves Kshatriyas, and claimed kinsmanship with the Rajputs in the north, but they looked insignificant and even ludicrous in comparison with the warlike and brave Rajputs. The Rajputs were certainly better-built, more handsome, heroic, refined and politically experienced than their dark-brown, stunted and simple-minded compatriots in the south. The Moghuls, on the other hand, were far better organized and more powerful in the 17th rather than in the 16th century. The Moghul power had reached its zenith in the 17th century under the leadership of the magnificent Shah Jehan and his stern but able and crafty son, Aurangzeb. How and why then did the Marathas succeed where the Rajputs failed? The mere statement of the fact that the warring Moghuls and the Marathas professed two antagonistic religious faiths in India—Muslim and Hindu—cannot afford a satisfactory solution of the problem. Because if the Marathas were staunch adherents of Hinduism, the Rajputs were in no way less orthodox in their religious zeal than the Marathas. Followers of a new religion are generally more zealous and virile than the devotees of old established faiths. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, was almost a contemporary of the Maharashtra

saints who were the pillars of Maratha renaissance, and yet the Sikhs endowed with superb physique and invincible courage, and with all their religious fervour and zeal at command, failed to establish an independent Sikh Raj till after the break of the Moghul power. The Sikhs were ever ready to sacrifice their lives on the divine altar of their faith. Unfortunately both the Rajputs and the Sikhs situated as they were, had to carry on their struggles near the heart of the great Moghul power, and hence though they were not crowned with success, their failure itself was a glorious one. The struggles of the Rajputs and the Sikhs in the north weakened to a certain extent the central Moghul power at Delhi, and emboldened the Marathas in the comparatively remote south to carry on their war of independence. The Moghuls, thus pulled simultaneously in three different directions, failed to concentrate their mighty power at an easily vulnerable point. The Deccan was always a separate geographical entity from the rest of India, and the traditions in the south were naturally different from those in the north.

Historical research is never creative like scientific research as it is concerned only with the past, and the past by its very nature is an unchangeable quantum. One may perhaps be able to change by his personality and power the course of the present-day events and thus modify the future to a certain extent. But the past remains unchanged. It cannot be wiped out. Historical research is, therefore, by its very nature only collective and constructive at its best. It gives only a better perspective or a new view-point of the unchangeable past. A study of the past is certainly educative and instructive, and may serve as a good guide at the present day. A research-worker in history collects old inscriptions, documents and letters by a diligent search, deciphers them all and tries to interpret the past with their help and on their evidence. The interpretation, though truthful, is by its very nature pragmatic.

Justice Ranade in his well-known treatise—"The rise of the Maratha power"—tried to deduce the causes of Maratha renaissance in the early part of the 17th century by abundant references to events that happened in the 17th and even the 18th centuries. He tried his best to prove—

(i) "that the rise of the Marathas was not a mere accident due to any chance combination, but was a genuine effort on the part of a Hindu Nationality, not merely to assert its independence, but to achieve what had not been attempted before—the formation of a confederacy of states animated by a common patriotism, and

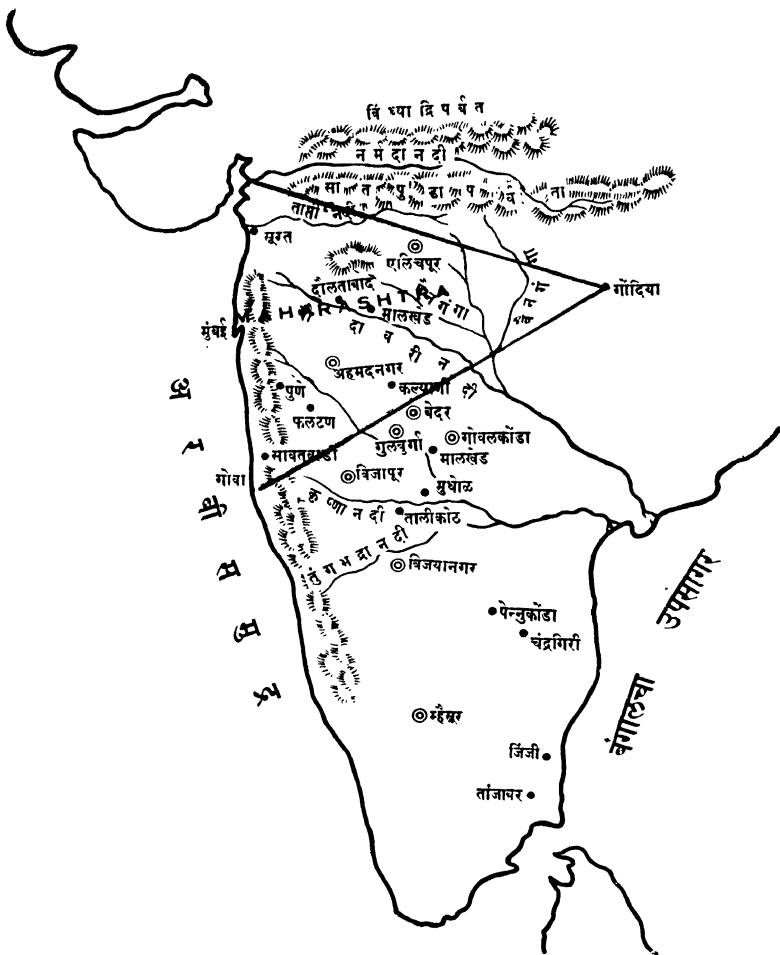
(ii) that the success it achieved was due to a general upheaval, social, religious and political, of all classes of the population."

An attempt is made here of constructing a picture of the background of Maratha renaissance not by references to later occurrences and events, but by a bird's eye-view taken at long range of the Marathas from the various standpoints of race, descent, language, religion, traditions, customs and manners. The peculiar racial characteristics of the Marathas and the special form of Hinduism as conceived by them are thus prominently brought to the forefront from a strictly historical consideration of the past. Comparisons between the Vaishnavite saints in Maharashtra and the protestant reformers in the West like John Wycliffe or Martin Luther may be very interesting, but they are not scientifically relevant to historical interpretation and constructive theorization of past events in Maharashtra. The historical stage ought to be erected with the materials available. If there is not enough material for the work more should be collected, but pictures of other magnificent theatres, howsoever interesting they may be, cannot add an iota of strength to the structure, though they may, to a certain extent, be eloquent about its valuation. But prices of articles differ in different countries and at different times and they also vary with the circumstances.

Attempts at determining the dates of Mukundraja—the first Marathi poet by a correct interpretation of the verses concerned, and Pundalika, the founder of Pandharpur temple, may prove of interest to historians. The simple explanation of the word 'Chitpavan' may afford some food for thought, and the fine distinction drawn between Vaishnavism, Bhagwat-dharma and Maharashtra-dharma may provoke philosophical thinking. The theory of racial admixture may perhaps shock the puritanic pride of orthodox people and make the Hindus look small in the

modern age of racial supremacy and arrogance. There are several other points in this construction which will afford ample opportunities for criticism if not for appreciation and acceptance. Occasionally, a plank may be found to be exactly fitting in the setting, but without any apparent tangible support. But its fixture is definite as its removal may cause damage to the creation. Modern historical research has clearly proved that Shahaji Raje played a significant part not only in the establishment but even in the conception of 'Hindvi Swarajya' at its early stage. Though handicapped by the service of the Mahomedan rulers for all his life, he certainly dreamt of an independent Hindu Raj under the able guidance of the Marathas. His illustrious son, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, realized in actual life the ambitions of his father, and brought unfading glory to the Maratha race. He rescued Hinduism from an untimely death at the hands of the fanatical Muslim rulers. An attempt is made in these lectures to give a correct picture of the historical background for the exploits of both Shahaji and Shivaji. These lectures do not at all deal with their glorious exploits and unparalleled achievements. They merely describe the stage of Maharashtra history before the entry of these two great heroes on its platform. The lecturer abruptly stops his discourse, and the chronicler drops his pen immediately on their entry, and bows his head in reverence and awe to them.





## II

### MAHARASHTRA

THE triangular country which lies on the western coast of Central India just below the Vindhya mountains is known as Maharashtra. The coast-line running from Daman to Karwar is one side of this triangle. The irregular line running from Karwar in the Modern Bombay Presidency to Gondia in the Central Provinces is the second side of the triangle. The river Tapti running from east to west of the peninsula forms at present the third side of the triangle, though the river Nerbuda which is to the north of Tapti and runs parallel to it was in ancient times considered to be its northern boundary. Gondia is thus the vertex of the triangle and the western coast-line is its base. The area of this tract is approximately 100,000 square miles.

Maharashtra is divided in three distinct physical regions. The narrow coastal strip between the Sahyadri mountains and the sea is known as *Konkan*. The mountainous tract covered by the Sahyadri ranges is known as *Maval*. The wide rolling plains down from the Sahyadri ranges to the far East are known by the general name *Desha*. The coastal strip of Konkan is over 300 miles in length, but its breadth is only 30 miles on an average. The average rainfall in Konkan is nearly 80 inches per year, while in some places like Mahabaleshwar in the Sahyadri mountains it is as heavy as 200 inches in a year if not more. A number of streamlets carry the rain-water from the Sahyadris to the Arabian Sea which is quite close. In the rainy season these streams look like mighty swollen rivers, and the sea rushes fast through these natural openings far inside the land. The coastal strip of Konkan is thus parcelled into a number of sub-divisions by these creeks great and small. When two such creeks meet at some point in the main land, a portion is naturally detached from it nominally in the form of a tiny natural island. Communications between different places in Konkan are thus rendered difficult, for travellers are often required to cross the intervening creeks by ferries while travelling from one place



to another. A man from Desha who visits Konkan for the first time is surprised at the sight of these various broad mighty rivers which are hardly mentioned in books on Geography, but which look more formidable than the Nerbuda or the Godavari or the Wainganga. A nameless stream which has its source in the Sahyadri is turned into a river 3 or 4 miles broad when it enters the sea nearby, and all this wonderful transformation takes place within its course of 10 to 20 miles in length. The climate of Konkan is warm and moist though equable due to its proximity to the sea. The sub-strata of the soil at a depth of 3 to 4 feet is generally rocky, and hence the land is not very fertile. Rice is the principal crop in Konkan. The land is however picturesque as the soil is favourable to the growth of Palms, Kaju and Mango trees, specially in the southern part of Konkan, *i.e.*, in the vicinity of Goan. The palms are mainly of two varieties, the Cocoa-nut and the Betel-nut. The area of Konkan is nearly 10,000 square miles, and it comprises the modern British Indian districts of Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri, the state of Savantvadi and the Portuguese territory of *Goan*.

*Maval* or the Ghat-matha is the country just on the top of the Sahyadri ranges. The soil is poor and the land is barren in spite of the heavy rainfall it receives. Here also rice is the staple crop of the land though the yield is far less than that in Konkan. Patches of land in the narrow valleys between the different mountain ranges, and small plots on the hills themselves in places, where the slope is gentle are desperately converted into small agricultural holdings by the residents of Maval known as the *Mavales*. The hill-forts built on the top of these ranges protect the land from invaders. These permanent sentries have naturally played a very important part in the political history of Maharashtra. The natural forces such as the Sun and the rain carved out a number of abrupt, flat-topped peaks in the Sahyadri ranges, which were then easily converted into impregnable forts by the addition of a few bastions and walls at the least inaccessible points. Various princes at different times have cut flights of steps or winding roads up the rocks, fortified the entrances with a succession of gateways and erected towers to command the approaches. The whole region of the Ghats and their

branches too are literally dotted with forts. The Sahyadri can boast of as many as 300 forts which are situated in its folds. There are natural springs of the finest water in most of them, while all of them contain well-built tanks and reservoirs which store water in abundance during the periodical visits of heavy rains from June to September. The country is mountainous and communications are few and steep.

The *Desh* or the Deccan plateau is a vast tract extending from the Sahyadri in the west to the river Wainganga in the east. The land just near the mountain is barren as it falls within the rain-shadow of the Sahyadri ranges, but becomes fertile towards the east. The rainfall in the western part of the plateau is consequently low and uncertain, and hence the cultivation there is poor and unprofitable. It is only along the narrow banks of the few rivers like Godavari and Krishna and their tributaries that water the surrounding country, that a farmer is assured of a good return for his labour. The heavy clouds of the south-west monsoon are entirely shut out by the Ghat ranges from the whole of the western Deccan plateau. The few clouds that surmount the barrier sail away to the fertile regions in the far east leaving the western land unwatered and hence often untilld. Generally speaking, the western part of the Deccan plateau supplies a bare measure of subsistence to the sons of the soil. The staple crop of this region is the hardy millet—Jawari, Bajri or Maize. The annual rainfall in this part is hardly 20 inches on an average. The land however becomes more fertile as one proceeds to the east and the average rainfall also increases from 20 inches in Ahmednagar to 30 inches in Amraoti, 45 inches in Nagpur and 55 inches in Gondia. The blackcotton soil of Berar is famous for its fertility. If a line is drawn parallel to the base of the triangle of Maharashtra through Paithan, the small triangle so cut off from Maharashtra would nearly correspond to the modern Marathi part of Central Provinces and Berar. This is a very fertile and self-contained unit. All crops—Rice, Wheat, Jawari, Pulses, Gram, Oilseeds and Cotton—can be grown at one place or the other in this comparatively small area. This tract is not therefore required to rely on other provinces for its food-supplies. Other provinces in India are not so fortunate as

this eastern section of Maharashtra, as rice is grown exclusively in some provinces like Bengal and wheat in others like the Punjab.

The physical nature of a country is largely responsible for moulding the character of its inhabitants. The people in Konkan are thus hardworking, tenacious and alert. Perforce they are required to work hard for their bread and to look out for fresh avenues for supplementing their meagre agricultural income which is hardly sufficient to meet their bare requirements for a year, howsoever hard they may work on the soil. The people living in the mountainous tract of Maval are naturally sturdy, active and supple. They can bear any extra strain with more patience, and can resist the pangs of hunger and poverty better than their more lucky neighbours on both sides. They are ill-clad and ill-fed, and yet they are vigorous and can face the vicissitudes of both fortune and weather with a courageous heart. The people living in Desha are contented, indolent and easygoing. Any adventure is a bugbear to them. They live a happy and peaceful life in their own little domain while the storms and tempests of the outside world generally pass silently over their heads without drenching them or molesting their homely life.

### III

#### DERIVATION OF 'MAHARASHTRA'

THE derivation of Maharashtra as 'Mahar-rashtra', the country of the Mahars as given by some Western scholars is undoubtedly silly as the Mahars did not belong to an independent race, but merely formed the downtrodden and insignificant part of the people who lived in that country. A country is always named after the brave and adventurous people who bring it to prosperity and prominence, and not after those who laboured as slaves and lived as the outcastes. There are many interesting theories in vogue relating to the origin of the word 'Maharashtra'. The word literally means Maha-rashtra—'a great nation', and its political history undoubtedly justifies the name. Dr. Bhandarkar thinks that the name is derived from the early Aryan colonists called the 'Rashtikas' or the 'Rashtrikas' or the 'Rattas', 'Rattis' or the 'Rathis'. When these Aryan invaders conquered a large portion of the country and settled there, they began to call themselves 'Maharathis'—'Maha-rashtrikas' as the simple 'Bhojas' and the 'Kosalas' called themselves afterwards as 'Mahabhojas' and 'Mahakosalas' to signify their greatness. Another theory attempts to derive the name of the country 'Maharashtra' from 'Maharashtri' which was the prakrit dialect spoken by the Aryans who migrated to the south and colonized the tract. The history of colonization of the south by the Aryans must have extended over 6 or 7 centuries. For, in ancient times, the Deccan or the 'Dakshinapatha' as it was then called, was considered to be a separate entity from the rest of India known as the Aryavarta—or the land of the Aryans or the 'Bharatkhandā'—as the land of King Bharat. The huge parallel mountain ranges of the Vindhya and the Satpura extending across the entire breadth of the peninsula from the east to the west, formed the natural fortifications of the south. The big rivers Nerbuda and Tapti flowing from the east to the west of the peninsula, formed the natural broad ditches along the fort walls erected by nature ; and these natural ditches being always full

of deep water and deceptive currents added considerably to the isolation of the south from the north of India. The valleys of these two rivers were full of dense forests and carnivorous animals and these impediments made the south impenetrable for a long time. A traveller from the north to the south had first to negotiate the mighty fortifications of the Vindhya; then he was required to cross the perilous Nerbuda; he had then to find out his way through the hilly labyrinths and the dense forests of the Satpura hills to the basin of the river Tapti; and then only he could come to the plains in the south after crossing the easily flooded Tapti river and wending his way slowly through the uneven tracts on the banks of the river which were covered by wild growth of shrubs and bushes. All these natural obstacles prevented the Aryans for a long time from crossing to the south. The Aryans living in their old home in the Punjab were naturally attracted by the fertile plains of the Gangetic valley in the east, and had no inclination to take a perilous leap in the dark and unknown regions of the Deccan.

There were three principal gateways to the Deccan through which the Vindhya could be crossed with comparative ease. Those who came from Punjab to the south by sea along the western coast *via* Sindh found shelter in Surparak and Aparantaka, *i.e.*, parts of northern Konkan. Those who descended to the south along the eastern sea-coast, found refuge in Kalinga, Andhra and the surrounding countries which in no way form parts of Maharashtra. Those who crossed the Vindhya through the central gate-way of the peninsula, came to the fertile plains of Vidarbha (modern Berar) either by the Handiya-Harda-Baitul-Ellichpore route or by the alternate Mandleshwar-Burhanpur-Dharni-Ellichpore route. These were the two natural passes in the centre through which the Vindhya could be easily negotiated, and thus formed the thoroughfares though perilous, to the Deccan plains from the north.

The name Maha-rashtra is no doubt of Aryan origin, but the first reference to that word is made in Varaha-Mihira's famous work on astronomy which was written in the 5th century A.D. The stone-inscription of Satyashraya Pulakeshi of 611 A.D. in Badami mentions the name of the southern country as Maharashtra. Hiuen Tsang, the great Chinese traveller who

visited India at this time, mentions Pulakeshi as the great Kshatriya king of Maharashtra who defeated the great king Siladitya Harsha of the north and maintained his independence. Rajashekhar who wrote his works sometime between 910 and 940 A.D., mentions Maharashtra along with other countries in the south such as Mahishmaka, Ashmaka, Vidarbha, Kuntal, Krathkeishik, Surparaka, Nasikya and Kunkan. All the countries mentioned above form Maharashtra, and yet curiously enough they are separately mentioned by him along with Maharashtra. Rajashekhar also makes a mention of the clearly Dravidian countries in the south such as Keral, Pandya, Andhra, Chol, etc. Rajashekhar was a court-poet of Mahendra-pal, king of Kanouja, but he calls himself Maharashtra-chudamani,—the ornament adorning the head of Maharashtra. His knowledge of Geography as seen from his works seems to be extensive and accurate. Probably he had travelled throughout India and was personally acquainted with the countries described, by him. 'Karpur-manjari' is a work written by him in the Prakrit language—Maharashtri. It seems that Rajashekhar was a poet of Maharashtra who lived from 884 to 959 A.D. A stone-inscription of 1008 found at Sitabaldi and preserved in the Nagpur Museum, refers to a Maha-samanta who claims descent from the Maharashtra-Kuta family. The poet Jayamangal who lived in the 12th century clearly defines the geographical limits of Maharashtra as follows:— 'नर्मदाकर्नाटयोर्मध्ये महाराष्ट्रविषयः Maharashtra is the name of the country between the river Nerbuda and the province of Karnataka'.

The name Maharashtra is thus clearly of a later date as the earliest reference to it is of the 5th century A.D. The old name of the country was 'Dandakaranya' which clearly shows that the tract was once a dense forest. As mentioned in Ramayana, Dandakaranya was infested by Rakshasas. The Maharashtra Brahmins even to-day chant the following Mantra at the time of worship:—'गोदावर्याः उत्तरे तीरे दण्डकारण्ये देशे—In the country of Dandakaranya on the northern bank of the river Godavari'. The people of Maharashtra who live to the south of the river Godavari, also speak of their country as Dandakaranya at the time of performing their daily worship, the only change

in the Mantra being दक्षिणे (southern) instead of उत्तरे (northern) as qualifying the bank of the river Godavari. That the country Dandakaranya was supposed to be co-extensive with modern Maharashtra can be surmised from a stone-inscription of 1702 A.D. of Dikpaldeva or Danteshwar, king of Bastar. The inscription refers to Bastar as a country adjoining Dandakaranya (दण्डकारण्य निकटवर्त्तमान देशे).

In addition to the clearly Dravidian countries such as Keral, Pandya, Chol and Andhra, the great classical work Mahabharat mentions Vidarbha, Ashmaka, Aparanta, Gopa-rashtra, Mallarashtra, Pandurashtra, etc., as the countries in the south. The word 'Rashtra' as signifying a country of the Gopas or the Mallas or the Pandus in the south as mentioned in Mahabharat, developed in due course into Maha-rashtra. The edicts of Asoka also mention the countries of the Rashtrikas, the Pattanikas (Paithan) and the Aparantas in the south. The name 'Maharashtra' was thus unknown both to the writers of Mahabharat and also to the great king Asoka. The name was then only in the making, and was not completely evolved. Probably the country was divided into small Aryan colonies, each colony being an independent kingdom in itself. Maharashtra as a great nation was not then born.

There were four Prakrit languages—Magadhi, Shaurseni, Paishachi and Maharashtri—current in Northern India in the 5th century B.C. They were all derived from Sanskrit. The learned Pandits wrote in pure Sanskrit, and probably spoke the language in its pure form, but the common people used the Prakrit languages. Paishachi was current in Punjab, Kabul and Kandahar; Shaurseni was spoken in the province of Mathura—Agra; Magadhi was the language of the people living in Behar and Bengal; and Maharashtri was the language spoken by the central divisions of the Gangetic valley and the adjacent provinces of eastern Rajputana and Malwa. Maharashtri thus seems to have been the principal Prakrit language in Northern India as it was spoken over a comparatively large area of the country. Vararuchi, who was a famous grammarian of the Prakrit languages, lived about the year 250 B.C., and wrote his famous grammar of the Prakrit languages known as the 'Prakrit-Prakasha'. It is a book divided into 12 chapters, and the first 9 chapters of the

book deal with Maharashtra while the other 3 chapters of the book are devoted to the other three Prakrits—Paishachi, Shaurseni and Magadhi respectively. Vararuchi wrote the grammatical rules of Maharashtra in details while in the case of the other three Prakrit languages he describes their peculiar characteristics only and winds up the discussion by saying 'शेषं महाराष्ट्री वत्—the rest as per Maharashtra'.

The oldest written work in Maharashtra as known to us to-day is "Sapta-Shathi Gatha" which was probably edited by King Hala about the year 60 A.D. It is a collection of interesting poems originally composed by about 50 men and 7 women writers. It is of the nature of "Subhashita-Sangraha", i.e., a collection of pithy and wise sayings on miscellaneous subjects. The great poet Bhasa who lived probably before the date of Vararuchi, wrote 13 dramas in Sanskrit; but the characters representing women and servants in his dramas speak in 'Maharashtri' while the principal characters use Sanskrit as their medium of expression. There must have been a number of works written in 'Maharashtri' before the date of Vararuchi, but they were probably lost in course of time. A standard Grammar in any language is always preceded by a number of standard literary works in that language, and 'Maharashtri' had certainly acquired then the status of a language, and was not a mere dialect. Both Jainism and Buddhism were preached for the first time by Mahavira and Goutam Budha respectively about the year 550 B.C. as they are supposed to be the founders of those great religions. The followers of Budha wanted to appeal to the common people and therefore used not Sanskrit but the Prakrit language Magadhi or Pali as the medium of expression, as Buddhism first flourished in Magadha or Behar which was the home of Magadhi. With the rise and spread of Buddhism Pali rose to a great importance in India as it became the religious vehicle of Buddhism as opposed to Sanskrit which was so closely associated with Vedic Hindu religion. The Jain savants, however, wrote their religious works in 'Maharashtri', and Jainism thus gradually permeated to the south from the Gangetic valley, as mainly the Rashtrikas who spoke 'Maharashtri', crossed the Vindhya for the conquest of the Deccan.



#### IV

### THE DATE OF THE ARYAN COLONIZATION OF MAHARASHTRA

THERE is a great divergence of views between the European and eastern scholars of antiquity about the dates of the composition of the ancient Sanskrit works from the Vedas onwards. The Indo-Aryans, no doubt, lacked the historical sense ; and they mention neither the date nor the place of the composition of the ancient classical works in Sanskrit. Time and place are the two main bulwarks of a historian ; and as they are conspicuous by their absence in ancient classical works in Sanskrit the task of the historian becomes an uphill one. The Hindus consider the Vedas as the revelations of God ; and they have therefore no beginning (अनादि) in time. Time was divided into four main divisions called Yugas by the Aryans—Krit, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. The number of divine years in the four yugas above referred to were 4,800, 3,600, 2,400 and 1,200 respectively, the thousands representing the number of years in the yugas proper while the hundreds denoted the joining times—संध्या and संध्यांश between the different yugas. A year of mortals corresponded with one day in the divine year, the year in both cases being of 360 days only. Thus one divine year was equal to 360 ordinary mortal years. According to this calculation—

Krit Yuga	will be of	1,728,000	years
Treta Yuga	„	1,296,000	„
Dwapara Yuga	„	864,000	„
Kali Yuga	„	432,000	„

A Mahayuga, i.e., a circle of the four Yugas together, will be completed once in 4,320,000 mortal years. According to the calculations of all Indian astronomers, Kali Yuga commenced about the year 3101 B.C. and it has thus still to run about 427,000 years. According to a verse in Mahabharat itself, the battle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas was fought when Dwapar Yuga was being changed into Kali Yuga.

अंतरे नैव संप्रति कलिद्वारयोर्भूत ।

स्यमतपंचके युद्धं कुरुपांडवसैन्ययोः ॥

The date of the Bharatiya Yudha would thus be 3101 B.C., and Mr. C. V. Vaidya accepts this date. But the verse in itself is not incontrovertible, for the words (अन्तरे) 'period between' may as well refer to the joining time संध्या and संध्यांश between Dwapar and Kali Yuga and which may therefore extend from 100 to  $100 + 200 = 300$  divine years or from 36,000 to 108,000 ordinary mortal years. It is, therefore, quite possible for any orthodox Hindu Pandit to carry the date of the Bharatiya Yudha to the far remote past, i.e., any year from 3101 B.C. to 111,101 B.C. The date of Ramayana creates a much more complex problem than that of Mahabharat. For, the story of Ramayana took place sometime in Treta Yuga according to orthodox Hindu traditions. The dates of Rama and Ravan could not therefore be earlier than  $(864,000 + 3,101)$  8,67,101 B.C. and later than  $(1,296,000 + 864,000 + 3,101)$  2,163,101 B.C., and many orthodox Hindu Pandits insist on these dates as they can find ample quotations from ancient Sanskrit works in support of their statements.

The European scholars, on the other hand, naturally have a strong bias in favour of Greek civilization which they consider to be the parental source of Indo-Aryan civilization; and consequently they assign far later dates to all ancient Sanskrit works from the Vedas onwards. They assign the date 1400 B.C. at the utmost to Rigveda, the oldest of the known Sanskrit works, and about 400 A.D. to Ramayana and Mahabharat. Whether Valmiki wrote his Ramayana following the footsteps of Homer in the "Illiad" or *vice versa* is an old controversy and owes its origin to the blind belief of European scholars in Greek literature as the first literary expression of human civilization in the world. The orthodox Hindu Pandits who consider the Vedas as the revelations of God on the one hand, and the equally blind European scholars who, in spite of invulnerable proofs from the texts themselves, decline to concede to ancient Sanskrit works earlier dates than the beginning of Greek civilization on the other, are the two extremes through which an antiquarian scientist and historian in India has to steer his way.

Mr. B. G. Tilak published his "Orion" in 1893 in which he discussed and proved the antiquity of the Vedas by pure

mathematical calculations based on the astronomical references to the positions of the stars in the Vedic texts themselves. The arguments are unassailable as they are based on science and backed up by mathematical calculations. Mr. Tilak's conclusions were supported by Mr. S. B. Dixit who wrote his "History of Indian Astronomy" in 1896. Among the European scholars, only Mr. Jacobi accepted Mr. Tilak's view about the date of Rigveda as he arrived at the same conclusion independently from a consideration of other references in the Vedic texts. It is not possible to explain in detail the principles of these astronomical calculations here. It is a well-known mathematical fact that the equinoctial points slowly recede about the circle of the ecliptic—a phenomenon known as the 'precession of the equinoxes'. Hindu astronomy was originally based on the 27 Nakshatras or the stellar constellations. The circle of the ecliptic was thus divided into 27 parts by the ancient Hindu astronomers so that each Nakshatra approximately meant an arc of  $\frac{360}{27} = 13.3^\circ$  degrees. It takes nearly 72 years for the equinoctial points to recede one degree, i.e.,  $72 \times 13.3 = 960$  years to recede through one complete Nakshatra. At present the vernal equinox is between the 'Uttara-Bhadrapada' (Andromedae Alferat) and 'Purva-Bhadrapada' (Pegasi) constellations. The vernal equinox was in the Mrigshirsha or the 'Orionis' Nakshatra at the time of Rigveda as seen from the references to the text. It, therefore, clearly means that from the time of the Vedas the vernal equinox receded from Mrig (Orion) to Uttara-Bhadrapada (Andromedae) via Rohini (Tauri Aldebaran), Kritika (Tauri), Bharani (Muscae), Ashwini (Arietes) and Revati (Piscium). The reversion of the vernal equinox through 6 Nakshatras (constellations) means a length of time of  $(960 \times 6)$  5,760 years approximately, as counted from to-day backwards. The date of Rigveda cannot therefore be later than  $(5760 - 1940)$  3820 B.C. These astronomical calculations enable us to assign approximately correct dates to ancient Sanskrit works, either from the references in the texts to the position of the vernal equinox or to the commencement of Uttarayana or to the occurrences of the seasons in particular Nakshatras. For as the equinoctial points recede, the different

seasons of the year change at the rate of 72 years per degree, i.e., 960 years per Nakshatra. The following are some of the important land-marks in ancient Indian History as judged from the astronomical data found in classical works in Sanskrit :—

- (i) *Rigveda*—4000 B.C. as the vernal equinox was in Mrig (Orion) then.
- (ii) *Satapatha Brahman*—3000 B.C. as evidenced by the rising of the Kritikas (Tauri) exactly in the east.
- (iii) *Maitrayani Upanishad*—1900 B.C. as evidenced by the mention of the autumnal equinox in the middle of Shravistha or Delphini.
- (iv) *Vedanga Jyotisha*—1400 B.C. as evidenced by the mention of the same phenomenon in the beginning of that Nakshatra.
- (v) *Panini's Ashtadhyayi*—800 B.C.
- (vi) *Mahabharat*—as we know it to-day, was written about 300 B.C., and *Ramayana* about the year 100 B.C.
- (vii) *Smritis*—200 B.C. to 500 A.D.
- (viii) *Puranas*—800 A.D. to 1500 A.D.

The dates of the first four landmarks are based mainly on astronomical calculations while the dates of the later works are based on other sources. The difference in the dates of the later works as given by Indian and European scholars, gradually diminishes as we approach the historical period of Indian History commencing from the date of Alexander's invasion of India in 326 B.C. The texts of the post-Panini works also are not very reliable as there are copious interpolations in them, and their dates cannot, therefore, be determined from mere references to the texts, as the several interpolations are of different but subsequent dates than the original works, and are likely to be mistaken for the originals. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat* as we know them to-day, are enlarged and revised editions of original works which have now become extinct. The originals are merged completely in the enlarged editions, and cannot therefore be separated from them, the additions being made by several writers at various periods of time. The pre-Panini literature, however, is free from such interpolations as the Vedas were considered to be the direct revelations of God, and the Vedic

literature was consequently treated with great respect and awe. Panini was undoubtedly born before the birth of the Prakrit languages. His grammar is based on Sanskrit language only which he calls भाषा, showing that it was a spoken language then. He refers to the peculiarities in Vedic literature by the terms मंत्रे, छंदसि, निगमे or आषे. His grammar is evidently based on Vedas, Brahmanas and Upanishadas only. Probably, he had heard about the Yavanas and Shakas, but they had neither kings nor governments of any form amongst them. Even the Persians were known to him merely as a community living by their arms as seen from the Sutra—पश्चादियौघेयादिभ्योऽणत्रौ. It means that the great Persian emperor Cyrus was not born at the time of Panini. There is no mention of Buddhism or Jainism in his work. Mahabharat was also unknown to him. The countries south of the Vindhyadri were unknown to him, though he shows a detailed knowledge not only of the Geography of Northern India but also of countries adjacent to her northern and western borders. It is also possible that he did not purposely mention the countries in the Deccan as they did not speak Sanskrit then, the people inhabiting the land being non-Aryans. The Sutra कंबोजाख्यक written by Panini was extended by Katyayana who wrote the Vartikas on Panini's grammar to the word कंबोजादिभ्य which included in addition to the people and king of Kamboja the kings and people of Chol, Saka, Yavan and Keral, as explained by Patanjali. Katyayana lived about the year 350 B.C.; and Patanjali who wrote his unique Bhashya on the grammar of Panini as amended by Katyana's Vartikas, lived about the year 150 B.C. Panini's Sutra वासुदेवार्जुनाभ्याम् वुन shows that both Vasudeo and Arjun were treated as Gods and worshipped when he wrote his Grammar. Arjun lost his divinity when the Mahabharat was written. But the original Bharat known as Jaya and probably written about 1000 B.C. deified Arjun along with Vasudeo. Bhagwat-Gita which was probably written at the same date, treats of Arjun as an Anshawatar, i.e., partial incarnation of God, as seen in पांडवानाम् धनंजयः. The Sutra कुरुगार्हपत of Panini is also extended by Katyayana to कुरुवृज्जोर्गार्हपत indicating that the Vrijiis were looked upon by Panini as non-Vedic people though they were absorbed in Vedic Hindu religion at the time of

Katyayan. Panini's date can, therefore, be fixed approximately at 800 B.C. Panini does not mention Maharashtra at all while the edicts of Asoka make some reference to that country. Thus we can conclude that the Aryans must have invaded and conquered parts of the Deccan sometime between 800 B.C. and 250 B.C. The references in Mahabharat to the countries in the Deccan in detail support this view.

The Aryans who descended by the eastern coast, occupied Kalinga, Andhra, Chol, Pandya and Keral countries. Very few people reached the countries on the extreme south as the majority must have settled in the northern parts of the Deccan which were very fertile and not far remote from the old homes of their forefathers. Those who crossed the Vindhyadri by the western coast, occupied the Aparantaka at first and southern Konkan afterwards. Those who crossed the Vindhyadri at the centre, probably settled first in Vidarbha and colonized afterwards the extensive Dandakaranya forest which was infested by Rakshasas whom the Aryan invaders from the north conquered. It was quite natural that a majority of the Aryans who came to the south should settle in the countries on the border-land between Aryavarta and the Deccan and very few should go to the far off countries in the south. The Aryans, therefore, being in a majority preserved their distinctive individuality in Maharashtra which is a border-land country between the north and the south, and entirely lost it in the further south as there they being in a minority merged with the original inhabitants of the land and adopted their languages and general culture. Vedic Hinduism as slightly modified by the southern Animism and Pantheism, became the religion of the land, and the study of Sanskrit became imperative as it attained the grandeur of the divine language through the medium of which the Vedas were revealed by God Himself.

## THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE DECCAN

WHEN the white Aryans first came to India, they found part of the country inhabited by wild and uncivilized black tribes whom they called the Rakshasas. These tribes also occupied southern India, and formed the original residents of the country. The Adi-Dravids or the pre-dravidian people consisted of the Gonds, Khonds, Bhills and other kindred tribes. They were ugly and black when compared with the fair-complexioned Aryans, and were naturally held in abhorrence by the civilized Aryans and contemptuously called the Rakshasas. But as seen from the Ramayana, the Rakshasas had their own civilization though of an elementary type, and had some sort of reverence for the Vedic Hindu Gods whom they feared. Linga-puja, however, was their esoteric religious cult. The mystery of creation would always appear as a supernatural power in the development of the human race to all men in the elementary stage of civilization ; and the instinct of race-propagation and preservation would lead them to the worship of the mysterious power as hidden in the carnal source. 'Linga' was an emblem of that mysterious and latent power. The 'Linga' was considered to be the divine spirit which constantly warred for the protection and preservation of the human race with the evil spirits as exhibited by the wild and ferocious animals and the reptiles and also the wild roaring powers of Nature. The aborigines propitiated the evil spirits by offerings, and protected themselves from the miseries and evils caused by them. Famine and pestilence were due to the anger of those evil spirits whom the aborigines dreaded and consequently worshipped. But they considered the 'Linga' as the supreme divine power of creation and worshipped it with reverence. The Gonds are probably the descendants of the Rakshasas as they call themselves even to-day 'Ravan-Vanshi' and 'Pulastya-Gotri'. It is a well-known fact that the demon-God Ravan belonged to the Pulastya Gotra or clan. The Gonds are also the most civilized people among the aborigines of India. They rose to prominence in later historic times, and founded

large kingdoms and fought bravely to defend them from foreign invasions. The Bhills who are also brave warriors and great lovers of independence, worship Shiva in the form of Linga. These aborigines were absorbed by the Aryans in the folds of Hinduism as Sudras after conquering them. Some of the independent spirited aborigines must have undoubtedly preferred to retire to the hills and the forests rather than live as Sudras in Aryan lands. They must have thought it more honourable to rule in hell than to be slaves in heaven.

There was a great world-wide movement of the Semitic people sometime between 6000 B.C. and 4000 B.C., *i.e.*, before the march of the Aryans to India from their ancient homes. They were brown people with prominent noses. The Assyrians, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and the Phœnicians probably belonged to this Semitic race-stock though each of them had its own individual peculiarities and minor racial differences. They established kingdoms in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and the Nile valley. They were great sailors, and spread over the whole of the Mediterranean basin. They settled largely in Spain and in Carthage. They were remarkably civilized and modern in their spirit of adventure. They were great shepherds and good agriculturists. The Dravidians were akin to the Semitic tribes, and probably belonged to their main parental stock. They colonized the eastern and western coasts of India and Ceylon in the period of the world-wide movement of the race. The islands in the Indian ocean were also occupied by them. A few might as well have landed in Kathiawad or Sind, and moving northward occupied Baluchistan and the N.W. Frontier districts. This would account for the similarity of the old Baluchi language (Baruhi) with the modern Dravidian languages. The recent excavations at Mahendjaro and Harappa confirm this hypothesis. The Dravidian civilization, however, flourished mainly in the Deccan and the islands of the Indian ocean while the Aryans were consolidating their colonies in the Punjab and were gradually moving eastwards. The Dravidians were far more civilized than the aborigines who probably belonged to the same parental race-stock as that of the Negroes, though there were many minor differences between the two branches.



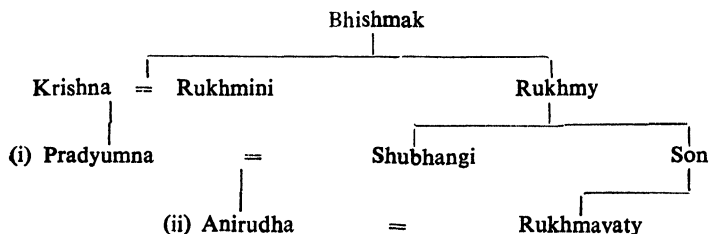
China was another great centre of an ancient civilization greater than that of the Semitic races in those times. European scholars have generally failed to grasp the real value of the contributions made by China to the progress of the human race as the movements of the Mongolians did not affect Europe for a long time. The short-statured, yellow complexioned, fair, agile and flat-nosed people who dwelt in China and the countries nearby, came to India from the north and the north-east almost at the same time as the Aryans came from the north-west and the north. Burmah, Assam, Bengal, Behar, Nepal and Bhutan were probably colonized by the civilized people coming from the north-east of India, while the Aryans conquered and settled in the Punjab. The invaders from the north-east were brave adventurers and active spirits like the Japanese of to-day. They were called the Nagas. The Aryans in Punjab while moving eastward for colonization very soon came in contact with them, and recognized them as their equals. Inter-marriages between the Aryans and the Nagas were very frequent in the pre-Mahabharat and also in the Mahabharat age. The Shaishu Nag dynasty ruled in Behar about the year 650 B.C. The kings of Vanga, Anga, Magadha and Kamrup were of the Nag dynasties. Even Kashmir was ruled for a long time by the Nagas, the Karkotaka dynasty being the most famous of them all. Though the Aryans considered the Nagas as their equals for purposes of marriage-relations, a clash for power between the two invading races was inevitable, and reached its climax at the time of Janmejaya, the grandson of Arjun who performed the Sarpa-Satra sacrifice and tried to exterminate the Nagas living in the Indo-Gangetic plains. The Nagas when defeated by the Aryans either receded to the far east of the peninsula or crossed the Vindhya and settled in the Deccan mainly in the border-land countries between Aryavarta and the Deccan, *i.e.*, Kalinga, Andhra, Kosal, Vidarbha and Maharashtra. The Nagas were brave, warlike, agile and adventurous, and had therefore all the qualities for being successful colonists. The Naga women were fair, delicate, active and of an artistic temperament like the Burmese girls of to-day; and it is no wonder if the tall, fair and muscular Aryans chose them as their brides and raised them to the dignity of queens.

According to religious traditions, the sage Agasty was the first Aryan to cross the insurmountable Vindhya and settle in the south. He ordered the Vindhya to lie down till his return and afford him a safe passage, which the mountain is said to have duly obeyed. The Vindhya then was as high as the Himalaya, but since that time, it lies down never to get up again ; and so it can be easily crossed. For, Agasty settled in the south, and never returned to the north. The Vindhya is still lying down, waiting for him to return, but, alas in vain ! Now, this Agasty was the son of Jaratkaru who was an Aryan, and Jaratkaru who belonged to the Naga family. He was the first Aryan colonist to the south, but when he went to Vidarbha he found it to be a populous and rich country ruled by a great king. Agasty thereupon married Lopamudra—the princess of Berar. Who were the rulers in Vidarbha then, if Agasty was the first Aryan emigrant to the south ? The kings of Vidarbha were civilized, and the people were happy, prosperous and contented. Probably the rulers belonged to some Naga dynasty as the Nagas being pressed by the Aryans in the north crossed the Vindhya long before them.

The Aryans, as we have already seen above, colonized Maharashtra sometime between the dates of Panini and Patanjali. Though the classical works Mahabharat and Ramayana as known to us to-day, were written about 300 B.C. and 100 B.C. respectively, the history related in these works is of a very ancient period. There is no astronomical reference to Rashis, *i.e.*, the 12 divisions of the sky—in the Mahabharat while the Ramayana often refers to the Rashis, consequently proving it to be of a later date. For, ancient Hindu astronomy was entirely based on the principal 27 constellations, and the Mahabharat makes references to the Nakshatras only. But the Greek astronomy was based on the 12 Rashis which the Aryans adopted in their later astronomical works. The Aryans learnt this new method of astronomical calculations from the Greeks with whom they came in close contact at the time of Alexander's invasion of India and shortly thereafter and found it to be a more convenient system than the one based on the 27 Nakshatras. The stories in the Ramayana and the Mahabharat were undoubtedly narrated

in their present form long after their occurrence. Mr. C. V. Vaidya assigns 3101 B.C. as the date of the Bharati Yudha or the great war as described in Mahabharat. Mr. Tilak, however, thinks that the war was fought about the year 1400 B.C., and Dr. K. L. Daftary the great antiquarian scholar and astronomer of Nagpur relying mainly on astronomical calculations assigns the year 1197 B.C. to the Bharati Yudha. The story of Ramayana according to Mr. Daftary is based on the historical fight between Rama and Ravana which took place sometime in the year 1609 B.C., while Mr. J. S. Karandikar of Poona who is well known for his scholarship in Sanskrit classics, assigns the date 2372 B.C. to that event. We may accept provisionally the later dates as assigned to the two epic wars referred to in the Ramayana and Mahabharat, by Dr. Daftary for purposes of the following arguments. The great King Aja of the solar dynasty was an ancestor of Rama. He must have, therefore, lived before 1,609 B.C. He is described as having married Indumati who was a princess of Vidarbha according to epic traditions. Now if the Aryans did not come into the south before 800 B.C., *i.e.*, the date of Panini, to which race then did the fair and delicate Indumati belong? Either she was a Naga princess or the story is a myth, and has no historical basis. So also Krishna lived about the year 1197 B.C. the date of the Bharati Yudha, and he married according to religious and historical traditions Rukhmini who was also a princess of Vidarbha, her father's capital being Kaundinyapur. The same argument would prove her to be a Naga princess or the story would have to be rejected as a myth. Thus even the later dates proposed by Dr. Daftary point out vividly the impossibility of Vidarbha being an Aryan country in the age of Ramayana and even that of Mahabharat. The earlier dates assigned to these two epic episodes by Messrs. Karandikar and Vaidya, if accepted, would make the theory still more impossible, and even ridiculous. The only alternative solution would be to assume that the Aryans conquered the south and colonized Maharashtra long before the date of Panini, and that Panini did not mention the countries in the Deccan in his great systematic and exhaustive work on Grammar—the “Ashtadhyayi”—due to sheer carelessness

and negligence ! We are not in the least prepared to countenance this alternative assumption absurd as it looks on the face of it, as Panini is acknowledged on all hands as the most scientific and systematic writer of the age. That Vidarbha was colonized by the Nagas long before the Aryan conquest of the Deccan seems to us to be the only correct solution of the problem. The names of towns in Maharashtra such as Nagpur, Nagpada, Nagaon, Nagothane prove this theory. There is another substantial proof in support of this Naga Vansha theory about the early colonization of Maharashtra and Andhra. Among the Aryans it was not considered proper to marry the daughter of one's own maternal uncle. On the other hand the marital relations among the Nagas were rather loose when compared with those in vogue among the Aryans. Megasthenes who was a Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya, commented severely on the loose character of the Indian women he came across. His experiences were naturally limited to Magadha which was under the Naga rule for a long time, and where probably the Naga marital customs and morals lingered even after the advent of the Aryans. Marital relations in Tibet and Burma are even to-day less rigid than those in India. The Nagas evidently carried with them their marital customs to the south, and it is supposed to be a great privilege and honour in the south even to-day to marry one's own maternal cousin of the first degree. The Bhoja dynasty of Vidarbha entered into two such successive marital ties with the Yadavas in the north as can be seen from the following genealogical table of King Bhishmak of Vidarbha :—



We can now understand why a later descendent of the great Agasty who had a Naga mother and probably a Naga princess

as his wife, and who was the first Aryan to come to the south for colonization, went specially to the north as an ambassador long after and interceded on behalf of the Nagas with king Janmejaya who was waging a relentless war of extirmination with them, and ultimately prevailed upon him to spare at least some famous Naga families in the north. The Nagas probably embraced Buddhism sooner than the Aryans, because it elevated them to the status and rank of Aryan settlers immediately, as Buddhism was the earliest revolt against the Chaturvarnya ; and any such revolt by its very nature is bound to have more adherents from the lower Varnas than the higher ones. The Sudras and the downtrodden people in Hindu religion are naturally eager to embrace any new faith which may be based on equality of the four Varnas as they have nothing to lose and everything to gain by their conversion. Proselytism succeeds by evoking the sympathy of the oppressed people who are naturally dissatisfied with the prevailing order. This also explains why many old images of Gautam Budha have the hoods of 'Nagas'—cobras as a protective background, the fangs and the tongue just crowning the head of the deity. The Nag (cobra) is even to-day worshipped by the Hindus in the south.

## VI

### THE MARATHAS

THE usual sources for the construction of ancient Indian history are stone-edicts, copper-plates, remains of ancient architectural monuments, contemporary literature, religion, traditions, legends and customs. These sources are by their very nature illusive. Poets and dramatists, whether ancient or modern, rely more on imagination than history, and literature is often embellished rather by the wealth of imagery than by the details of facts. The poet owes his inspiration more often to the illusive dreamland than to the realistic matter-of-fact world, where events generally do not shape according to his whims or sweet fancies. Thus, only a kernel of truth can be gathered from the enormous chaff of contemporary literature, and that too if it be properly sifted. The Puranas are religious and not merely historical works. Legends and beliefs were of greater value to the writers of the Puranas than pure facts. The genealogical tables given in the Puranas are largely of a fictitious nature, and contain only a germ of truth. The writers had no historical sense whatsoever, and the accounts are generally exaggerated. The Puranas were considered sacred books by the Hindu Pundits who however did not consider it sacrilegious to interpolate several passages of their own in the body of the original texts. These interpolations are numerous, and owe their insertions to various authors living in different places at different times. The Pauranik texts have thus often become self-contradictory. The Smritis also have undergone the same treatment at the hands of their followers and devotees who did not consider it profane to insert a verse here and there for purposes of twisting the ancient religious laws to suit their own views and requirements. The commentators, while trying to explain away the inconsistencies and the self-contradictory statements in the Smritis in the form of a logical unity, have instead of clarifying the issues created more confusion and irreconcilable complexities. The stone-edicts and copper-plates which a historian is naturally inclined to believe as gospel-truth, are often

counterfeit and pass as old records though of a modern date. Some of them are genuinely old no doubt, but the writings on them are of an exaggerated nature specially when they deal with the generosity, wars and exploits of the then ruling kings. Most of the old copper-plates found and preserved in the museums deal with the grants of lands to learned Brahmins and are full of Raj-Prashasti—praises of the donor kings. Which priest would like to incur the displeasure of his master by carving an unpalatable truth on a stone pillar or a copper-plate? Human nature has hardly changed during the last three thousand years. Even to-day an editor of a newspaper would paint a defeat of his own countrymen as a glorious, successful and strategic retreat. Contemporary records of inscriptions too cannot therefore be used for constructing ancient Indian History unless they are selected with caution and duly toned down after verification of their dates. Because the law of sedition in some form or other governed publication at all times and so truth was always diluted in the old records.) The inscriptions of the Haihayas, Kalchuris and Vakatakas are full of such exaggerations. They had established small kingdoms at various places in Maha-Kosal, *i.e.*, the northern and eastern divisions of the Central Provinces. The Vakatakas ruled at Bhadravati or Bhandak. The Sinhan king of Haihaya dynasty was ruling at Khallari in Raipur district. A Naga dynasty was ruling at Sharabhpur in the same tract, and another Rajarshi-tulya-kula at Shripur nearabout, while the Kalchuris ruled at Tripur near Jubbulpore. Each of these kings according to the inscriptions considered himself a Sarvabhoum or a Chakravarty, *i.e.*, an emperor; each had ignominiously defeated his neighbours, and spread his dominions far and wide; each had an army of 5,000 elephants and 50,000 soldiers—cavalry and infantry together! All these great kings and their feudatory samants however ruled in the small tract between Jubbulpore and Chanda. If the inscriptions, though genuine and of an old date, are to be believed in entirety, there would hardly be left any room for men to live in this tract due to the enormous number of these royal elephants alone! Some of these kings have assumed the names of other great kings from the Sanskrit classical epics to prove and establish their greatness. For example, Mahabhao

Gupta is referred to as Janmejaya, and Mahasheo Gupta as Yayati in these inscriptions. The word 'Maha' is a prefix meaning 'the great', and precedes their real names Bhao Gupta and Sheo Gupta. Some of them even tried to introduce new eras in their honour, but as expected the new eras lapsed into oblivion after the demise of their originators.

The white Aryans considered themselves to be superior not only to the aborigines, but also to the Dravidians and the Nagas who were of a black, brown (copper) and yellow (wheat) colour respectively. The Aryans were free to marry Dravidian and Naga girls, but were not willing to countenance the marriages between the Aryan girls and the Dravidian or Naga men, much less with the aboriginal males. The 'Anulome' marriages were sanctioned by religion, and the 'Pratilome' marriages were denounced. But the oft-repeated denouncement of 'Pratilome' marriages by the various Smritis is itself a proof that such marriages did take place in spite of the stubborn opposition of the Aryans. In fact, many of the Pratilome marriages are responsible for the creation of the fifth class of Hindu society known by the general name of 'Antyajas' or the 'Chandalas' as evidenced by Manusmriti.

“शुद्धादायोगवः क्षत्ता चण्डालश्चाधमो नृणान् ।

वैश्यराजन्यविप्रासु जायन्ते वर्णसङ्करः” ॥

But the Chandalas themselves could rise above their class and Parashara, who was a son of an Antyaja, 'श्वपाकाच्च पराशराः' became a Brahmin by his own merits. Vasistha married with Arundhati, who was the daughter of a Chandal 'वासिष्ठश्चाण्डाली मृगमेये'. And this was not a solitary example in itself according to Manusmriti which clearly says—

“एतोश्चान्याश्च लोकेस्मिन्तपकृष्टप्रसूतयः ।

उत्कर्षं योजितः प्राप्ता स्वैस्वैर्मर्त्युणैः शुभैः” ॥

This was inevitable in a society where different races tried to blend together into a compact national and religious structure of a new society. The Nagas were generally more warlike, artistic and adventurous than their Dravidian brethren who were in turn better shepherds and agriculturists than the Nagas, as the race characteristics of the Mongolian and Semitic tribes lead one to believe and infer. The Nagas were thus gradually absorbed



mainly among the Aryan Kshatriyas, and the Dravidians with the Aryan Vaishyas. This is only an indication of the general nature of race-blending, and not an absolute index. The Nagas were well versed in Arts and Sciences too, and some great savants among them like Nagarjun, the father of Hindu Chemistry, must have passed as Brahmins in the new Hindu social edifice created before the advent of Buddhism which tried to demolish in its turn even the elementary four Varnas. Nagarjun was a Buddhist by religion, but probably a Naga by racial descent as his name suggests. The temple of Nagarjun at Ramteka is a glorious memorial to the achievements of this great son of Vidarbha. The people of Vidarbha were celebrated for their artistic tendency in literature, and the fact that the Vidarbhi style was considered as distinct from the Aryan style in the north points to the distinctive racial characteristics of the people in Vidarbha in matters of Arts and Sciences. The Nagas in Vidarbha were gradually assimilated with the Aryan invaders, and thus was formed the homogeneous structure of the Maratha race. Similarly, many Dravidian kings and tribal chiefs must have been absorbed by the Kshatriyas, and the learned Dravidian Pundits by the Brahmins, the majority of course being absorbed by the Vaishyas. The Chaturvarnya in the pre-Budhistic age was based on the tribal and individual qualities, and not on the birth-heritage as stated in the Bhagwat-Gita by Shrikrishna

‘चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागदाः’ ॥

Sometime about 1000 B.C. the progeny of these mixed marriages belonged to the Varna of the father irrespective of the Varnas to which the mothers in the family belonged. The Pitru-Savarnya was for many centuries the code-law which governed Chaturvarnya. It was only in a later age that the Matru-Savarnya code was substituted for Pitru-Savarnya, and the Varna of a child was decided by the Varna of the mother, and not solely by that of the father. Even among the Aryans there were free inter-marriages between the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas, though the Anulome variety was encouraged, and the Pratilome type not only discountenanced but condemned. The Anulome marriages were not restricted to the main three Varnas of the Dwijas or the twice-born—once at birth and

secondly at the Sanskar of Munja (thread-ceremony)—but were extended to the Anaryas, *i.e.*, the Sudras also. Bhima married Hidimba who was a Rakshasa girl, and Arjun married girls from both the Nagas and Gandharvas who were Anaryas though culturally superior to the Rakshasas. Both Parashara who was a Brahmin, and Shantanu who was a Kshatriya, married one after the other Matsya-Gandha who was a Sudra girl. Yayati who was a Kshatriya king, married the Brahmin girl Devayani, and also Sharmishta who belonged to the Anarya Rakshasa tribe. The progeny of Yayati by both of his wives was classed as Kshatriya, while Vyas who was Matsya-Gandha's son from Parashar, was classed as a Brahmin, but her sons from Shantanu were recognized as lunar Kshatriyas according to the then existing marital laws. The four Varnas too were not fixed but mobile. It was possible for a man belonging to one Varna to step into the higher one by dint of his own efforts and merit. The Apastambha Sutras clearly state this fact.

“अधर्मचर्यया पूर्वो वर्णो जघन्यं जघन्यं  
वर्णमापद्यते जातिपरिवृत्तौ  
धर्मचर्यया जघन्यो वर्णो पूर्वं पूर्वं  
वर्णमापद्यते जातिपरिवृत्तौ”

Sometimes a retrograde motion did take place, and men of the upper Varna were classified with the lower Varnas. The great sages Vyas, Parashar, Vasistha and Vishwamitra were not Brahmins originally, but they raised themselves to that Varna by their own merit. Mahabharat alone furnishes us with many examples to support this statement.

(वसिष्ठः) “तपसा ब्राह्मणो जातः संस्कारस्तत्र कारणम्  
ततो ब्राह्मणतां जातो निश्चामित्रो महातपाः ॥  
जातो व्यासस्तु कैवल्यः श्वपाक्यास्तु पराशरः  
बहवोऽन्येऽपि विप्रत्वं प्राप्ताये पूर्वमद्विजाः” ॥

Thus even Brahminism was not a fixed Varna in old times. The Kshatriya and Vaishya Varnas were naturally more mobile, and the higher three Varnas together formed the Aryan community.

When the Aryans entered the Deccan sometime after the age of Panini, they brought these marital traditions to the south with them. They found there highly civilized Nagas and Dravidians as masters of the Deccan. The Aryans were vigorous

and powerful, and professed a highly refined and philosophical faith known as the Vedic Hindu religion. Naturally, the brave warlike and adventurous Rashtrikas or the Aryan Kshatriyas entered the Deccan in large numbers. They spoke Maharashtri—a Prakrit language derived from Sanskrit. They also knew Sanskrit which was considered to be (देवभाषा) the language of the Aryan Gods, and which was a great repository of Aryan traditions, culture, religion and philosophy. Some Brahmins, Vaishyas and Sudras too from the north must have entered the south in the wake of the Aryan conquest of the Deccan by the Rashtrikas. The majority of them settled in Maharashtra as a very large tract known as Dandakaranya was an uncolonized forest-land, and thus afforded a great scope for development to the Rashtrika warriors. These Aryan invaders freely mixed and intermarried with the Nagas, the Dravidians and even the aborigines who were then the settled people in the south, as such marriages were sanctioned by Aryan religion. It was also in the interests of the successful invaders of an already colonized country to mix freely with the original inhabitants of the land, for such close ties create a bond of sympathy between the rulers and the ruled, and thus ensure and strengthen the permanency of the power originally gained by the invaders by conquest. The marital bonds between the rulers and the ruled also forge the links of common interests between the two different races, and the progeny of the rulers naturally looks upon the land of adoption as the land of inheritance also, *i.e.*, the mother-land. The Moghuls in later days in the north and the Mahomedans in the south partially exploited this channel of marital friendships for strengthening their power in Rajputana and the Deccan respectively. This marital bond of unity between the two races is all the more necessary if the invaders are a mere handful and the conquered people too numerous to be exterminated or driven out from their mother-country. The Aryan philosophy of the Upanishadhas was also opposed to the killing of men and was based on sacrifice, truth and love. This spirit of 'Ahinsa' was further emphasized by the Jains and the Budhists, and the doctrine of non-killing or Ahinsa was extended by them to all living things—men, animals, birds and insects. 'Race-love' rather than

race-war was thus the adopted creed of the Indo-Aryans who came to the south and they expanded into a great nation not by the extermination of the people whom they met, but by amalgamating them in their social and religious structure and thus creating a unity out of diversity of interests. This spirit of expansion by racial amalgamation as shown by the Indo-Aryans is a glorious contrast to the spirit of race-extermination shown by their western brethren while colonizing Australia, Africa or America. It cannot be denied that the European colonists were both directly and indirectly responsible for the extermination of the tall Red Indians in America and the dwarfish bushmen of Australia whom they practically hunted out of existence. The Indo-Aryans on the other hand, amalgamated the original inhabitants of India in their social structure as Sudras, and opened the portals of civilization and culture to them to a limited extent. Of course, it would have been far nobler had the Aryan invaders treated the Sudras on a footing of equality and then embraced them in their fold. But even as it happened it was a generous action on the part of the Indo-Aryans and deserves special praise when compared with the conduct of the so-called Democracy-loving Aryans in the West. The Sudras in course of time advanced and developed by close contact with the Indo-Aryans, and are in a position to-day to contest with them for political supremacy in India. The Maratha people were thus born by the blending of these four great races of the world according to the religious tenets and the philosophical doctrines of Vedic Hindu religion as preached and practised in ancient times and modified by the influence of Buddhism and Jainism.

## VII

### THE INFERIORITY-COMPLEX

THE Vedic Hindu religion spread throughout the Deccan in the wake of the Aryan conquest. It was far superior to the Animism and Pantheism which were then the forms of religious worship in the south. Sanskrit was so closely associated with Vedic Hindu religion that its study was vigorously pursued in the Deccan, and the language got a great impetus. Aryan traditions were held in high esteem ; Aryan culture permeated through the masses, and the Aryans were deified as superior beings. This state of things was largely responsible for the fantastic and sometimes ridiculous theories which were advanced by the original southerners from time to time to prove their Aryan blood and Aryan descent. This inferiority-complex of the old virile Dravidian races in the south has unfortunately deepened in modern times as the Europeans who are the masters of the world to-day describe themselves as of Aryan descent. This racial inferiority-complex of the conquered people is largely responsible for the perverted views of historical currents as depicted by some Indian scholars. The perversion of Indian history by European scholars on the other hand is often intentional and purposive, and is the resultant effect of their inborn race-arrogance and conceit. Theories have no doubt a great importance in the construction of the ancient past from scanty details of facts, but they must be based on the solid foundation of facts and facts alone. Generally speaking, the Marathas (used as a national and not caste name) do not like to be classed among the descendants of non-Aryan people. But we know from actual facts that all shades of colour from the white Aryan to the Black Negro type are associated with the complexion of the Marathas of to-day. Some scholars like Mr. C. V. Vaidya try to explain away this colour-problem by describing it as the natural result of a long stay in the tropical sun, and consequently not of much importance in the determination of race-descent. But is the tropical sun in India really so partial that it

changed the complexion of some people to a dark jet colour, while it allowed others to retain their original complexion so as to enable them to compete easily with the Spaniards and the Italians of southern Europe? Some Marathas are very short-statured when compared with the northerners in the Punjab who are almost of pure Aryan descent. Some ingenious scholars however explain this race-divergence in stature by attributing it to their hardy habits of mountain-climbing among the Sahyadri hills. One would not be surprised if the average low nasal index among the Maratha people is explained by a reference to Surya-Namaskaras which they are supposed daily to practise. These are ingenious explanations no doubt, and may prove serviceable when the Marathas are compared with the Punjabis or the Kashmeris in racial characteristics; but how can they account for the divergence among the Marathas themselves in points of complexion, stature, shape of head and nasal index? Mr. V. K. Rajawade, the great Maratha historian and antiquarian scholar, conveniently argues in this connection that the Aryans when they entered India were already divided into three principal Varnas and the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas who came to India were of white, brown and yellow complexions respectively, while the Sudras who were the original residents of India were of a dark colour. Even this ingenious and phantastic theory failed miserably when it tried to explain the present black complexion in all castes of Marathas as seen at present. Inter-marriages with the Sudras had to be admitted as a partial solution of the problem. But this theory is not tenable, for the other branches of the Aryan race-stock which migrated to Persia, Arabia and the European countries in the West do not show traces of these three distinct colours among their descendants. They have a pure white complexion only. Secondly, all the varieties and grades of complexion, stature, head and nasal index to which we referred to are found among all classes and castes of the Marathas of to-day, and particular types are not confined to particular Varnas in accordance with the above theory. Even among the Chitpavan Brahmins in Konkan who are generally of a fair complexion, one finds some specimens who can stand comparison in point of complexion with the Negroes in

Africa. Which is then the rational explanation of this diversity, except the blending of the four great races of the world into a great Maratha nation? The following arguments also support the theory of race-mixture advanced here :—

There are two great divisions of the Brahmins in India. The Pancha-Dravidas and the Pancha-Gaudas. The Pancha-Dravidas constitute the Brahmins in the Deccan, and the Pancha-Gaudas represent the Brahmins in Northern India. The word Pancha (five) denotes that these two main divisions are again subdivided into five groups each. The Brahmins in India are thus classified into ten subdivisions. This division probably dates from the 10th century. But it is a remarkable fact that the Brahmins in Maharashtra, though predominantly of Aryan blood, describe themselves as one of the five Dravidas, and not as one of the five Gaudas. The Gaudas represent mainly the Aryan stock, while the Dravidas represent mainly the non-Aryan stock of Brahmins.

The Nag-puja or the serpent-worship is a typical Dravidian ritual, and is observed ceremoniously in Maharashtra. The Champa-shashti and the worship of Khandoba—as Kartikeya son of Shiva, and the general of the Gods,—is also another ritual peculiar to the south, and it is also observed in Maharashtra. The worship of Varaha (wild boar) as the third incarnation of Vishnool, in the south, probably owes its origin to the influence of the Gonds who regard it as a sacred totem. The Varaha temple at Ramteka is a standing monument of the aboriginal influence on Hinduism in the south.

The Kshatriyas in the north either belonged to the solar or the lunar race. It seems to be a historical fact that the Aryans came to India in two batches, the interval between the two invasions being probably about a thousand years. The Aryans who came previously had settled in the Punjab and colonized it, when the second invasion of the Aryans took place. These later invaders forced their way like a wedge through the Aryan colonies already settled in the Punjab, and occupied the Gangetic Valley. The Kshatriyas who accompanied the second invasion of the Aryans mainly belonged to the lunar clan, and are thus distinguished from the early conquerors and settlers who belonged mostly to

the solar clan. There is a third minor clan among the Rajputs known as the Fire-clan (अग्निवंश). It may perhaps owe its existence to the influence of later-day migrations of Aryan Kshatriyas from Persia after the date of Zoroaster. They might have brought fire-worship with them but conveniently forgot it after their assimilation with the solar and lunar Kshatriyas of India. Because the Agni-Vanshi Rajputs also claim to-day descent either from the solar or the lunar dynasties.

But in the south we find the Kshatriyas divided into four chief clans—Surya, Chandra, Yadav and Naga. The Surya and Chandra Vanshas clearly correspond to the solar and lunar lines of the northern Kshatriyas. The Yadavas no doubt describe themselves as belonging to the lunar stock, but the Yadavas are prominent in the south and not in the north. It seems that the Yadavas were mixed Kshatriyas and were considered at times inferior to their pure solar and lunar brethren in the north, though they traced their descent to the great God Shrikrishna. The admixture of the Yadavas was probably due to the Scythian hordes who invaded India in large numbers in the third century B.C., and became masters of Taxila, Mathura, Ujjain and Kathiawad. These Scythian hordes who belonged to the Mongolian stock soon settled in India. The Sakas as they were called were absorbed in Hindu society, and Kanishka who was a Kusha was considered as a great Hindu and Budhist Emperor. Rudra-Daman was a great Saka king of Kathiawad, and he was also considered to be a Hindu king. He gave his daughter in marriage to Pulumayi, son of Goutami-putra, the then King of Maharashtra. The Sakas also invaded Maharashtra and ruled there for nearly 150 years when they were defeated by the Satawahan kings of Maharashtra just as they were defeated in the north nearly a hundred and thirty years before by King Vikrama of Ujjain. Both these victors started their own Samvat and Saka eras which are observed even to-day by the Hindus. The Aryan Kshatriyas in Guzeratha and Kathiawad naturally inter-married with, and absorbed the brave Scythian warriors in their fold as they remained masters of that tract for a long time. This seems to be the probable beginning of the Yadava Kshatriya dynasty in the south as the Yadavas claim to have



come in Maharashtra from Dwarka, their original home in Guzeratha.

The fourth great clan among the Kshatriyas in Maharashtra is the Naga-Vansha, which accounts for the fusion of these two warlike races—Aryans and Nagas—in Maharashtra. The kings who belonged to the Naga-Vansha, however, were anxious to be classified as pure Aryans, though the Aryans in the north disclaimed them, and also refused to inter-marry with them unless pressed for political reasons. This inferiority-complex among the Dravidians, the Nagas and the aborigines was largely responsible for the concoction of the numerous mythical genealogical tables in the south, on the strength of which all families of whatever race-descent and status they may be, claim direct relationship with the best Aryan clans in the north, and trace their genealogy directly from the Sun or the Moon, condescendingly accepting 'Rama' or 'Bharat' as an intermediate ancestor. Not only the Marathas but the Gonds too in Maharashtra claim their descent from the Sun and the Moon, and describe themselves as solar or lunar Rajputs, pure and simple. When the Gonds rose to power, they married Rajput princesses and called themselves Rajgonds.

As Agasty was the first Aryan colonist of central and eastern Maharashtra, Bhrigu was considered to be the first Aryan colonist of Aparantaka or the Konkan. He came to the south along the west coast, and probably first settled on the bank of the river Nerbuda at Bhrigu-Katcha or modern Bharoach. The country was probably colonized before by the Dravidians who belonged to the Semitic race-stock, and were good sailors. The story of the Aryan conquest of Aparantaka must have been similar to the Aryan conquest of Vidarbha. It seems however that the Persians, who once belonged to the Aryan common stock, but had separated themselves from it in long past ages, and had developed their peculiar race-characteristics and religious faith and thus differed in essentials from the Indo-Aryans, invaded Konkan and after conquering a few coastal towns settled there. The Persians were known to Panini, as seen before, as a community living by their arms. But in the post-Panini days, they developed into a great nation and founded a large empire under

Cyrus. The descendants of Cyrus were great generals and they extended the Persian empire in all directions by conquests until they came in contact with the Greeks, and were defeated by them at the historic landmark of the battle of Marathon. Parsuram was probably a Persian general Ramius who came to and settled at 'Chitpalan' in the Ratnagiri district. His followers were called the 'Chit-pavans'—men who were purified by the fire (chit), and 'Chitpalan' clearly means the place where the fire was maintained. 'Chitpalan' is modern Chiploon. The Persians were even then worshippers of Fire, though the religious faith of their distant Indo-Aryan cousins had largely changed by that time. In course of time, the Persians under Parsuram were absorbed in Vedic Hinduism while Parsuram became recognized as a special deity of the Konkani coast, and secured a place among the ten incarnations of Vishnoo. This new Rama who came to Konkani as a great hero was distinguished from the Rama who killed Ravan by the difference in their respective weapons. The Rama who came to Konkani used like other Persians a battle-axe (परशु) in war and not the bow and the arrows. This explains the prefix 'Parshu' of the Konkani Avatar. The Chitpavans under Parsuram were thus the fore-runners of the Parsis from Persia who emigrated to India after a lapse of more than a thousand years. Religious conditions in India were so much changed at this later emigration of the Persians, and the Hindu castes had become so rigid and immobile that the absorption of a foreign element in Hindu society, though similar in general culture and religious traditions and sentiments, had become an impossibility. The Parsis have preserved their distinctive ancient religion to this day, and we know that the old Vedic religion must have been more akin to the Zoroastrian faith of the Parsis than to modern Hinduism.

The theory of the blending of various races and clans into a Maratha nation may not be palatable to the Marathas of to-day due to the inferiority-complex generally associated with the non-Aryan races. The idea will also be repulsive to many orthodox Marathas who take a great pride in the maintenance of and insistence on caste-purity in modern Hinduism. But the rigidity of the four Varnas as well as of the innumerable modern

Hindu castes which sprang from them is of a comparatively recent date only, and its history can hardly be traced to 800 A.D.—the beginning of the Pauranik Period in Hinduism. For the mental satisfaction of the orthodox Marathas, we state that the Dravidians were more religious, and had a greater tenacity of purpose than the Aryans, that the Nagas were better scientists and artists and more active and subtle than the broad-shouldered Aryans, and that the black Aborigines were more hospitable, grateful and patient than the white Aryans. We also state for their moral and religious satisfaction that even the northerners cannot boast of the absolute purity of their Aryan blood. The Naga type can be easily discerned in the eastern countries of North India like Bengal, Behar, Assam, Orissa, Nepal and Bhutan, and even the white Hindu Aryans in the western and central regions of Northern India absorbed to a smaller extent the Scythians, Kushans, Parthians, Huns, Magas and Greeks who invaded India from time to time in the Pre-Mahomedan period of Indian History. The myth of racial and blood purity is a later invention based on the rigid caste-system which made Hindu society immobile, inert and invirile about 800 to 1000 A.D.

## VIII

### EARLY REVOLTS AGAINST BRAHMIN SUPREMACY

THE doctrines of Buddhism and Jainism, though enunciated in the north among the Nagas and the Lichwis in Behar, gradually spread in the Deccan. Buddhism gained in importance due to the royal patronage of the great king Asoka who sent a number of Bhikshus (friars) to the south, and established Viharas or Monasteries for them at various places in the country, gave large grants to the monasteries for their maintenance and encouraged Bhikshus to write works on the religious doctrines of Buddhism and their commentaries in Pali for the benefit of the common people. Jainism, on the other hand, was not reduced to writing for a long time, and had no great royal patron like Asoka. Works on Jainism however appeared in course of time in Maharashtri, and so it became afterwards popular with the southerners, as Maharashtri was the spoken language of the ruling class and also of a large part of the populace of the Deccan. The three great religions however flourished side by side in the Deccan without much animosity, and Hindu kings often supported the Buddhist Bhikshus and the Jain Shramans, and paid sumptuous grants to their monasteries and sanctuaries. The Jain Pandits like Hemchandra in later days wrote in Sanskrit, and attacked the Purva-mimansa doctrines of Hinduism. Both Jainism and Buddhism were in fact revolts against the supremacy of the Brahmins and their love of sacrificial rites which involved the killing of animals, and therefore those new religions appealed more to the masses rather than to the classes. The Vaishyas and the Sudras eagerly embraced these new faiths in large numbers as both were open revolts against the Chaturvarnya system of the Hindus. Both Mahavira and Gautam were contemporary religious reformers though Mahavira perhaps preached his religion slightly earlier than Gautam. The Jains, however, think that Mahavira was only the 24th Tirthankar and that 23 other Tirthankaras preceded him. The Buddhists also believe that 24 Budhas lived before Gautama. In fact, it is sometimes

mentioned that Gautam was a disciple of Mahavira. But for practical purposes we can safely assume these two men as the contemporary founders and the first preachers of their respective religions.

• Both Jainism and Buddhism do not believe in the Vedas as the revelations of the God Almighty. Both have raised their protest against the Chaturvarnya system, and condemned all sacrificial rites. The doctrines of Tapa (Asceticism) and Sanyasa (Renunciation) in the Vedic religion were accepted by Jainism, but only Sanyas was adopted by Buddhism. The Vedic religion permitted only Brahmin males to follow and practise Tapa and Sanyasa while both Buddhism and Jainism opened their doors wide to all the Varnas—both males and females, and placed them on an equal footing. Both preached the doctrines of Ahinsa, love and truth, and laid special emphasis on Ahinsa. Both accepted the Sankhya philosophy as the basis of their religions and also the Karmavada of the Hindus. Both laid the highest stress on a moral life as the proper mode of living for all laymen. Purification of self was the goal, and a moral and useful life led one to that goal. Self-mortification and Penance were sanctioned by Jainism, but Buddhism did not encourage that type of asceticism. Bramha, Moksha, Kaivalya or Nirvan as the highest form of spiritual realization was accepted by these two new religions as the ideal to be aimed at and worked for. The realization of the ideal was, however, open to all men and women of all the four Varnas in both Buddhism and Jainism, and not confined to Brahmin males only. It was no wonder that these new doctrines got many adherents from the Vaishyas and the Sudras. Kshatriya kings were naturally averse to the Ahinsa doctrine, but Kshatriya women liked the tenets of the two new religions as averse to war and conducive to house-hold peace and happiness. The Vaishyas had a natural inclination towards the acceptance of Jainism. The Brahmins fought valiantly against these two new faiths as they endangered their social position and status. Many learned Brahmins, however, embraced these new faiths, and became heads of monasteries and rose to great importance in the reigns of Asoka and Kanishka. Buddhism was divided into the Mahayana and the Hinayana sects ; and though both

Budhism and Jainism protested against Hindu idolatry, large images of Budhas and Tirthankaras were erected and consecrated in temples and daily worshipped. Idol-worship soon reached its height in the Mahayana sect. The Jains, too, were similarly divided into the Digambara (naked) and the Shwetambara (white-clothed) sects. The Digambara sect is the logical conclusion of extreme Jain asceticism while the Shwetambara sect is a compromise. The Mahayana sect was a compromise between Sanyas and Karmayoga which probably owes its origin to the influence of Bhagwat-Gita. In later days, both the religions assumed a devotional aspect, and prayers were chanted to propitiate the idols of Budha and Mahavira. Budhism flourished mainly through royal patronage, but Jainism owes its progress to the influence of the religiously stern and austere life which the Jain Pandits lived. The Jain ascetics led a model life and wrote freely in the Dravidian languages and also in Sanskrit and Maharashtri. Jainism did not expand much in India, and it was generally tolerated by the Hindus who regarded it merely as a sub-sect of Hinduism. King Asoka was mainly instrumental in spreading Budhism not only throughout India but also in China, Japan and the Far East. He sent Budhist missionaries to all parts of the known world and supported them. At present, Budhism has many followers in Asia. In fact it is the second great religion in the world from the standpoint of the numerical strength of its followers. It has however almost disappeared from India, which was its land of birth. But Jainism has still many followers in India, specially in the rich mercantile community both in the north and in the south. 'Om Namah Sidham' and 'Sidhirastu' are the relics which show the part played by the Jain ascetics in teaching Hindu children in the south. They are regarded as quotations from Hindu scriptures to-day.

The three religions lived peacefully side by side and we have very few examples of religious persecutions in India. Conversions from one religion to another and *vice versa* were frequent. Religious toleration was specially marked in the north. Govindachandra, a param Saiva king, made a grant of 6 villages to two Budhist monks for the maintenance of a Vihar (*E.I.*, XI). His wife was a Budhist princess. On the other hand, a Budhist king

Madanpal granted a village to a Brahmin for reading Mahabharat to his queen who was a Hindu. In fact, inter-marriages between Hindus, Jains and Budhists were very frequent. Children of such marriages chose their own religion when they grew up. In fact these two new religions were considered merely as protestant sects of Hinduism in India, and it thus became possible for new Hinduism to incorporate the cardinal principles of both these faiths in a later age. Budha means an 'enlightened' being, and 'Jina' simply denotes a person who has gained a victory over his mind. The terms 'Budha' and 'Jina' were freely interchanged and applied to monks of both sects. In due course of time Budha was regarded by the Hindus as the ninth incarnation of Vishnoo, and was worshipped as such. Stories from Hindu mythology were incorporated in Budhistic and Jainic literature with necessary changes and *vice versa*. The Hindu Pandits and the Budhist and Jain monks wrote philosophical works and commentaries to prove the superiority of their respective religions and also to refute the arguments advanced by their religious opponents. The Hindus gradually abstained from performing animal sacrifices, and the Hindus in general and the Brahmins in particular gave up the eating of flesh. The cow was specially regarded as a sacred animal, and the eating of beef and drinking of wine were prohibited to all Hindus, though in Vedic times even great sages like Vasistha and Vishwamitra partook of beef, and killed cows and calves for entertaining guests, and no marriage-feast was considered complete without Madhuparka—a preparation of fleshy food and Somaras—some sweet wine. Even the Kshatriyas prided in being strictly vegetarians on the days of religious festivals and ceremonies. Both Budhism and Jainism impressed their clear stamp on Hinduism. The effect has survived more in the south than in the north, as Jainism was a living faith in the Deccan.

## IX

### THE SADIWAHAN KINGS

THE Rashtrikas who came to the south founded, small city states or areas of tribal lordship in different parts of Dandakaranya, and colonized the country. In course of time, the forests were cleared by them, and the lands brought under cultivation. The few Rashtrikas who moved further south were known as the Reddis and the Rajus in the Dravidian countries. That very few Rashtrikas penetrated to the far south is evident from the fact that while the Rashtrikas were able to impose their Maharashtra language on the border-lands of Vindhya-dri, *i.e.*, Vidarbha, Dandakaranya and Aparantaka, they were obliged to adopt the Dravidian languages in the southern countries. Sanskrit being the vehicle of Vedic Hindu religion naturally established its importance throughout the Deccan. The Rajus in Andhra and the Reddis in Tamil lands are comparatively few in number, and are absorbed by the vast Dravidian population of the land. The Maratha Kshatriyas however predominate in Maharashtra.

The first great king of Maharashtra seems to be Satakarna (or perhaps 'Jatakarna') of the Andhra-bhritya dynasty. According to Pauranic legends, he was the son of an unmarried Brahmin girl from Shesha, the Naga or Saka king, and was born at Paithan. He thus belonged to the Naga or Saka Vansha. The name 'Karna' indicates that he was born without any proper marriage ceremony having taken place between his parents. The story of the hero Karna in Mahabharat is well known, and need not be told here in detail. He was the son of Kunti—the mother of the Pandawas, and was born before her marriage. It seems that many children were born before marriage-celebrations in the days of Mahabharat, and Karna was not a solitary exception as some people suppose. For the word 'Kanin' is used in Mahabharat as a general name (common noun) for indicating this class of children. Girls were evidently grown up before they were married, and had close and intimate relations with men, which resulted at times in the



births of the 'Kanin' children. The custom of Swayamvar, so vividly described in the epics, also leads one to believe that girls were fully grown up, and were able to choose their own mates in those times.

The Andhra kings on the eastern coast had become very powerful in the days of the Sungas and the Kanwas who succeeded the Mauryas. The great Vikrama probably belonged to the Andhra dynasty and shifted to Ujjain from South. The Andhra kings had extended their kingdom from the east coast to Nasik which is very near the west coast. The capital of the Andhra kings was at Shri-Kakulam on the bank of the river Krishna. Satakarna was probably in the service of the Andhra kings, and rose in eminence to become a Viceroy of Maharashtra. He declared his independence later on, and became the first king of Maharashtra with Paithan which was his birth-place as his capital in 78 A.D. The Saliwahan Saka or the great era associated with his name, dates from this event, and is yet in use throughout the Deccan. It is a curious coincidence that both the Christian era and the Saliwahan Saka are associated with the names of two great individuals who had a doubtful parentage, and yet were makers of history. The era Vikram Samvat which is used in Northern India precedes the Christian era by 57 years while the Saliwahan Saka follows it after 78 years.

Megasthenes who was a Greek envoy at the court of Chandragupta has left a glowing account of the prosperity of the Andhra kings, who were first vassals of the Kanva kings but became their rivals afterwards and destroyed their power. The Andhras were overlords of the Deccan for about 300 years and Maharashtra was at first included in their vast domains. But it seems that the Andhras had to abandon their possessions in the west when pressed by the Sakas who raided over and ruled in Maharashtra for about 150 years. They were defeated by Satakarna in 78 A.D. and driven out of Maharashtra. This great event justly marked the beginning of the new era, as the king thereafter proclaimed his independence and completely threw away the Andhra yoke. He and his successors, however, had to wage constant wars with the Sakas and the Parthians for about 50 years after that event.

The dynasty-name 'Andhra-bhritya' can be explained in various ways :—

- (i) a servant of the Andhras ;
- (ii) one who had many Andhras as his servants. Satakarna was originally a general of the Andhra kings, and had naturally a large number of Andhra soldiers in his army. The compound 'Andhra-bhritya' may be dissolved as a Bahubrihi Samas instead of as a genitive Tatpurusha ;
- (iii) the mythical Shesha, who was the paramour of Satakarna's mother, might have been an Andhra who was clearly of the Naga-Vansha and the word 'Andhra-Bhartru' might have been corrupted to 'Andhra-bhritya'. The dynasty-name was in later times changed to Sadiwahan or Satawahan.

Whatever explanation we accept, one thing is clear that these Andhra-bhritya kings of Maharashtra were very proud of their maternal lineage, as can be seen from constant references to their mothers as 'Gautami-putra' and 'Vasisthi-putra' in the inscriptions. This seems to be an indirect corroboration of the legend as a reference to maternal lineage in such specific terms is an unusual phenomenon in inscriptions of Hindu kings. Among the Sadiwahan kings, Gautami-putra was a great ruler who finally defeated the Sakas who had invaded Maharashtra and established small principalities there sometime or other from about 50 A.D. onwards. Bhumak and Nahapan Kshaharat were both probably Saka satraps in Maharashtra, and ruled the country for their Scythian or Parthian overlords in the north and in the West. Gautami-putra ascended the throne in 109 A.D., and about the year 124 A.D., he drove away the Scythians completely from his country, and forced Rudra-daman, the Scythian king, to give his daughter in marriage to his son, Pulumayi. The Sadiwahan kings were thus constantly at war with these foreigners since their declaration of independence from the yoke of the Andhra kings. The Sadiwahan kings probably relied on their cavalry in battles, and used them successfully on a large scale. The word 'Sadi' means a keen or fast rider and 'wahan' means a carriage or a horse. This was

probably the first beginning of Maratha cavalry which played a great part in the later history of the Marathas. Sadiwahan was corrupted to Saliwahan or Satawahan !

Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar thinks that the Saliwahan era came in general usage long after these events as it is not specifically referred to in many earlier inscriptions. But the general practice then was to refer to the year of reign of the ruling sovereign in whose name the inscription was engraved. Each king had also the ambition of being called a *chakravarty*, and of founding an era after himself, and so he would naturally not like to refer to the Saliwahan era in his inscriptions. But non-reference to the Saliwahan era in the earlier inscriptions cannot disprove facts which are proved otherwise. Ptolemy—an Alexandrian Greek, wrote a book on Geography about the year 150 A.D., and therein he mentions *Sirios Polemios* (*Shri Pulumayi*) as king of *Baithan* (*Paithan*) on the bank of the river Godavari. This reference clearly shows that the Satawahan kings had firmly established themselves then as independent sovereigns of Maharashtra though they lost the territories to the north of the Vindhya-dri after the death of Gautami-putra. The Satawahan kings ruled in Maharashtra for nearly 200 years. They considered themselves as Brahmin kings and were great patrons of learning. They gave many grants to Budhist monks and monasteries also, showing their genuine love for learning. The Nasik, Karla and Bhaja caves were probably carved when the Satawahan kings were ruling over Maharashtra. The carvings are Budhistic at Karla and of a mixed Hindu and Budhistic character at the other two places. This signifies that both Hinduism and Budhism were followed in Maharashtra, and the Saliwahan kings respected both the religions, followed by their subjects. About the year 232 A.D., the large Saliwahan kingdom was broken up as the central authority collapsed, and the Bhojas, Abhirs and Rashtrakutas established small principalities in different parts of Maharashtra. The country was divided into a number of petty kingdoms which were constantly at war with one another. The Bhojas were powerful in Berar, the Abhirs,—probably the ancestors of the Yadavas—ruled in Khandesha, and the Rashtrakutas in the country round-about Nasik. The Kadambas, the

Silahars and the Mauryas were ruling on the western sea-coast. The history of these small tribal kingdoms is largely enveloped in darkness.

These tribal kingdoms in eastern Maharashtra and Vidarbha soon came under the supremacy of the Vakatakas of Bhadravati who were Andhra Brahmins of the Naga-Vansha. They extended their power in all directions. They had conquered the kings of Kosal, and king Vyaghra-raja of the Ucchakalpa dynasty called himself as a feudatory Samanta of the Vakatakas. Another branch of the Vakatakas was ruling at Vairagarha in Chanda district. Vairagarha or Vajra-garha was once famous for the rich diamond mines in the neighbourhood. The kings of Vairagarha were related by marriage ties to the Kharwale kings of Kalinga who belonged to the Chedi dynasty and professed Jainism. Kalinga, Kosal and Utkal were often known as the three Kalingas, and were often under one suzerain power. The Kalchuri dynasty of Tripur in Jubbulpore district was also very powerful in this period, and the chedi era established by the Kalchuri or the Haihaya kings dated from 248 A.D. Probably, Khandesha was under the supremacy of the Kalchuri kings.

## X

### THE CHALUKYAS AND THE RASHTRAKUTAS

THE Chalukya Kings are supposed to be Aryan kings who hailed from Ayodhya in the north and ruled Maharashtra and Karnataka for nearly 500 years. The Chalukyas in the south are supposed to be related to the Chalukyas in Rajputana. At least, it is supposed that both belonged to a common Kshatriya stock in the north. But the theory has no historical support whatsoever. The Chalukyas in Rajputana are of the lunar race, and belong to the Bharadwaja clan (Gotra) while the Chalukyas in the south consider themselves to be of the solar race and of the Manavya Gotra. This means that even their far remote ancestors were different, and by no stretch of imagination can they be considered even as distant blood-relations. An attempt is also made to establish a relationship between the Rathodes of the north and the Rashtrakutas in the south. The Rathodes in the north belong to the solar race, and have the Goutam Gotra while the Rashtrakutas describe themselves as of the lunar race and Atri Gotra. The Rashtrakutas were no doubt Aryan Kshatriyas once, but they had absolutely no connection with the Rathodes in Rajputana. The Rashtrakutas in the south had lost their original Aryan characteristics to a large extent by frequent inter-marriages with the Nagas and the Dravidians. The Chalukyas, on the other hand, though Aryan Kshatriyas once, belonged more to Karnataka though they ruled over Maharashtra as well. The non-Aryan inferiority-complex in the south was mainly responsible for the faked genealogical tables and the desperate attempts made by the southern Kshatriyas themselves to establish their kinship, though remote, with the northerners. An ingenious theory has been advanced to explain this divergence of Gotras between the northern and the southern Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas and the Rathodes. It is contended that the Kshatriyas had no Gotras of their own, but professed the Gotras of their family-priests as their own. This is no doubt the dictum of Vijnaneshvara as laid down in his 'Mitakshara' about

the year 1100 A.D. This was in fact an introduction to a later dictum कलावाच्यन्तयोः स्थितिः which came into prominence about the year 1300 A.D., and denied the very existence of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas in Kali Yuga, and emphasized that there were only two Varnas in existence in Kali Yuga—the Brahmins and the Sudras. But in old times the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were regarded as Dwijas along with the Brahmins, and had their own Gotras which they mentioned with pride in their inscriptions. Had the Gotras been borrowed from their family-priests, they would not have been specifically mentioned in the inscriptions. And even supposing that the Kshatriyas borrowed their Gotras from their Brahmin priests they became fixed in very ancient times, and so could not be changed with a change in the personnel of the family-priest. Even to-day the Gotras of the Kshatriyas both in the north and in the south are different from the Gotras of their hereditary priests. Pandit Gourishankar Ojha accepts Vijnaneshwar's view, but Mr. C. V. Vaidya asserts that the Kshatriyas had in old days Gotras of their own which denoted descent, and not merely discipleship. Both Pandit Madhusudhan Shastri (Maithil) and Pandit Vireshvar Shastri (Andhra) support Mr. C. V. Vaidya.

The Chalukyas in the south had their capital at Vatapi-pura or Badami in the heart of Karnataka. The Rashtrakutas ruled at Nasik in the beginning but removed their capital to Manyakheda or Malakheda when the Chalukyas rose to power. There were constant wars between the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas for supremacy in the south, and the scale sometimes turned to one side and sometimes to the other, but in general the Chalukyas had an upper hand in the south as they considered themselves to belong to the south, and had the sympathetic backing of the southerners. The Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas often inter-married with one another, but the marital ties could not stem the tide of their rivalry for political power. The Chalukyas also carried on a bitter fight with the Paramaras in Malwa for power, and often inter-married with them. The Paramaras consented to give their daughters in marriage to the Chalukyas only when hardpressed in war. The Chalukyas also entered into marriage relations with the Chola kings in the south who were distinctly

Dravidian. The following are some of the typical inter-marriages between the Paramaras of Malwa who considered themselves as pure Aryan Kshatriyas, the Rashtrakutas who were of a mixed Aryan blood, the Chalukyas who gradually mixed with Kanarese Kshatriyas and the Chols who were purely Tamil Kshatriyas :—

- (i) Arjun Verma Paramar married a Chalukya princess ;
- (ii) Tribhuvan Malla Chalukya married a Silahar princess ;
- (iii) Indra-Rashtrakuta married a Chalukya princess ;
- (iv) Tailapa Chalukya married a Rashtrakuta princess ;
- (v) Vimaladitya Chalukya married a Chol princess ;
- (vi) Chalukya Pulakeshi married a Naga princess of the Sendrak clan of Yelburga.

Not only the Kadambas and the Pallavas called themselves Aryan Kshatriyas, but even the Chol, Pandya, Keral and Kol kings are described in “Harivansha” as of the Lunar race and descendants of Turvasu. But the Chol kings, when they rose to power, described themselves as of the solar race and descendants of Shibi. The Sendrakas of Yelburga who were of the Naga-Vansha also intermarried with the Chalukyas. Inter-marriages between these various royal families were frequent in this period though the Kshatriyas in the north looked condescendingly on the Maharashtra Kshatriyas and contemptuously at the Kshatriyas who had settled in the far south, *i.e.*, the purely Dravidian country. The drama “Nava Sahasanka-charita” by the poet Padmhagupta relates the love romance of Sindhuraja Paramar of Malwa with Shashiprabha, daughter of the Naga-Vanshi king Shankhapal of Bhogavati which was situated to the south of the Nerbuda. The romance ended in a marital tie between the two lovers. The racial fusion was thus completed by this time, and the people of Maharashtra who were really of a mixed blood, prided themselves on being called pure Aryans from the north.

The Chalukya dynasty rose to power about the year 550 A.D., Jayasinha being probably the founder of the dynasty. The Chalukyas assumed the titles of ‘Prithvi-vallabha’, or ‘lord of the earth’, and ‘Satyashraya’, or the ‘Support of Truth’. Pulakeshi Chalukya consolidated his power in the Deccan, and was a rival of the famous king Harsha Siladitya of northern

India. Harsha invaded the Deccan in 620 A.D., but was repulsed by Pulakeshi and had to suffer a heavy loss. The great Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, visited India while Pulakeshi was the ruling sovereign of Maharashtra. The following passage from his book of travels describes his visit to Maharashtra and the court of Pulakeshi II :—

“The kingdom of Maharashtra has a circumference of about 6,000 miles and the circumference of the capital is about 30 miles. To the west of the capital runs a big river. The soil is rich and fertile, and yields a great harvest of corn. The climate is hot. The people are simple and honest. They are tall, proud and distant. Whoever does them a kindness can count on their gratitude. But, he who does them an injury never escapes their vengeance. If any one insults them, they risk their lives to wash out the affront. If any one in distress begs their help, they forget their own safety in their efforts to help him. When they have an insult to avenge, they never fail to warn their enemy beforehand. This done, they wear their armour and fight with a lance. In battle they pursue the fugitives, but never kill those who surrender. When they get ready for a fight, they drink heavily, and once drunk a single champion with a lance in hand will challenge ten thousand foes. To-day, the great king Harsha Siladitya carries his victorious arms from the east to the west, conquers distant races and makes nations near him tremble. But those of Pulakeshi's kingdom are the only men who have never yielded to him. Although several times Harsha has put himself at the head of all the forces of the five Indies, and called to his aid the bravest generals of all countries, and has himself marched to punish the men of Maharashtra, he has not yet overcome their resistance. From this fact alone it is possible to judge their warlike habits and customs.”

The fame of Pulakeshi reached the ears of Khosroes II, King of Persia. In 625 A.D. he sent a complimentary embassy to King Pulakeshi of Maharashtra. A large fresco painting at Ajanta portrays the reception of the Persian ambassadors by the great king Pulakeshi. The Chalukyas were great lovers of arts



and learning. Architecture flourished under their rule. They encouraged both Hinduism and Buddhism. Their inscriptions are either in Sanskrit or Kanarese, and none in Marathi which shows that Marathi was not born then. The Chalukyas were kings of both Karnataka and Maharashtra, but they loved Karnataka and spoke Kanarese, the language of the people, in addition to Sanskrit. Badami, the capital of the Chalukyas, was also situated in Karnataka. The emblem on their flag was that of a wild boar—a Varaha—which is a well-known totem of the Gonds, who probably borrowed it from the Dravidians. Varaha and Narsinha are worshipped in the south and not in the north. The Chalukyas who lived in the south, were naturally influenced by the religious cult of the Aborigines, and worshipped Varaha as a deity, and used the emblem for their national flag. This shows that the Chalukyas though originally Aryan emigrants from Northern India had completely assimilated with the Kanarese southerners. Hieun Tsang no doubt describes Pulakeshi as a Kshatriya and a king of Maharashtra. He was undoubtedly a great Kshatriya and was also a king of Maharashtra along with Karnataka. But that does not mean that he remained aloof from his people as an Aryan emigrant from the north. The Chalukyas considered the south as their home.

Govinda Rashtrakuta was a general of Pulakeshi II, who rebelled against his master, but was granted pardon. The Rashtrakutas were the Samants of the Chalukyas, and were treated by them on an equal footing because of their Aryan descent and noble heritage. The Rashtrakutas were the sons of Maharashtra while the Chalukyas had become comparatively foreigners. The Chalukya kings are described as 'Manavya Gotri' and also as 'Hariti-putra' in their inscriptions. This shows that they were proud of their maternal lineage. It was the natural consequence of a marriage alliance between a Dravidian king and an Aryan or a semi-Aryan princess of the Paramara family of Malwa or the Rashtrakuta family of Maharashtra. The Rashtrakutas became very powerful by these marriage alliances with the Chalukyas, and Dantidurga, grandson of Govinda Rashtrakuta, overthrew the Chalukyas, and captured Badami in 753 A.D. Dantidurga celebrated his victory by carving

the beautiful temple of Kailas at Ellora. The famous temple is dedicated to Siva and has been cut out of solid rock from a mountain. The design is sublime, and the ornamentations are minute and superb. The Ellora caves owe their existence to the Rashtrakutas as the caves at Ajanta were carved and painted by the Chalukyas. All the caves at Ellora were not carved at one and the same time, various kings of the Rashtrakuta dynasty being responsible for the construction of the various caves. Badami, the capital of the Chalukyas, and Manyakheta, the capital of the Rashtrakutas, are completely in ruins now and no trace of these great dynasties can be found there. But the wonderful caves at Ajanta and Ellora are the everlasting memorials of these great rulers, and pilgrims from all parts of the world visit and admire them and praise the greatness of the southern genius which first planned and then executed these gigantic and wonderfully beautiful monuments.

The Rashtrakutas ruled in Maharashtra for more than two hundred years. They were Shaivites, but curiously enough, they had the emblem of an eagle on their royal flag. The eagle is associated with Vishnoo, and not with Siva. The later Rashtrakuta kings, though Hindus by religion, had definite inclinations towards Jainism. This accounts for the spread of Jainism in the southern Maratha country. The names of the Rashtrakuta kings are very simple such as Govinda, Krishna, Karka, Indra, Dhruva, etc. They inherited the titles of the Chalukyas such as Prithivivallabha or Satyashraya, but they also delighted in titles ending in Varsha and Tunga such as Amoghavarsha, Nityavarsha, Prabhutvarsha, Jagattung, Sabhatunga, Nripatunga, etc. The Rashtrakutas were practically masters of the Deccan, and the Silahars of Kolhapur, the Gangas of Banavasi, and the Pallavas of Kanchi owed allegiance to the Rashtrakutas as their liege-lords. They were also masters of southern Guzerath, and succeeded in keeping the Arabs who had conquered Sind and established themselves firmly there, under check. They were at constant wars with the Gurjar and the Paramar kings in the north, Malwa and Guzerath being the bones of contention. The Gurjar kings of Kanouja were very powerful, and practically the whole of Northern India acknowledged their supremacy. The

Paramara kings of Malwa were Rajputs by blood, and had their fighting spirit and offered stubborn resistance. The Rashtrakutas were good Shaivas, but the last two Rashtrakutas accepted Jainism as their religious faith probably due to the marriage of Krishna III with a Ganga princess. The Ganga kings in Mysore were Jains, and Indra IV, who was a son of Krishna III by the Jain princess, became a devout Jain.

The Arabs of Sind were also at war with these northern kings. So friendly relations soon developed between the Arabs and the Rashtrakutas, both being at war with the northern kings, and a friendly commerce was established between Arabia and Maharashtra. Maharashtra became the chief commercial agent of the Arabs in India, and immensely profited thereby. The ports on the Konkan coast were developed into commercial towns. This is however a prelude to the friendship between Jayachanda and Mohomod Ghori against Prithwiraja, the common enemy of both !

The Arabian traders who visited India in this period have left very interesting records. Sulaiman made several voyages from the Persian Gulf to India and China, and wrote his work in 857 A.D. He says :—

“There are four great kings in the world, King of Babylon, King of China, King of the Greeks (Constantinople), and Ballal of Mankir who is the most eminent of the kings in India, and is acknowledged as such by them. Every prince in India is master in his own State, but all pay homage to Ballal. He has many horses and elephants, and has a regularly paid army like that of the Arabs. He is constantly at war with the Jurz (Gurjar kings of Kanouja whose kingdom extended to Kathiawar) kings who are unfriendly to the Arabs. The Ballal is partial to the Arabs, and his subjects follow his example.”

Ibn Khurdadba, another Mahomedan traveller who died about the year 912 A.D., wrote as follows :—

“The greatest king of India is the Ballal of Mankir. His country produces cotton cloth and Aloe wood. He keeps communications with other countries like Kamrun (Kamrupa) and Jabal (Java). Men on the east coast are good sailors, and sail in ships.”

Al Masudi another Arab traveller wrote in 953 A.D. as follows :—

“After Koresha (Shri Harsha) the country broke up into diverse nations and tribes such as Sind, Kanouja and Kashmir. The city of Mankir submitted to a king called Ballal. There prevails a difference of language and religion, and the kings are frequently at war with one another. The greatest king is the Ballal of Mankir. His troops are innumerable, including horses and elephants, but mostly of footmen as his capital lies among mountains.”

Al Istakhri wrote about 951 A.D.:—

“From Kambaya (Khambayat) to Saimur (Chaul) is the land of Ballal, and in it are several kings subordinate to him. It is a land of infidels, but there are Musalmans in the cities, and none but Musalman officers are appointed by Ballal to govern them. There are also Juma Masjids in the cities.” This is an example of Hindu tolerance with a vengeance in the old days !

Ibn Hankal who finished his work sometime before 967 A.D. wrote :—

“From Kambaya to Saimur is the land of Ballal, and several kings rule in it. The city in which Ballal resides is Mankir. The villages lie close to one another, and there is much land in cultivation.”

Ballal is the corrupt pronunciation of ‘Vallabha’ which was the title first of the Chalukyas and later on of the Rashtrakutas. The empire of the Rashtrakutas consisted of a number of feudatory chiefs. Even their rivals—their old overlords—the Chalukyas, were allowed to exist as Samants. In old times, kingdoms were not annexed after conquests, but the defeated kings were allowed to rule them provided they agreed to pay homage and regular tribute to the liege-lord every year. Agriculture flourished and commerce prospered in Maharashtra through the agency of the Arabs. The Marathas seem to have been more tolerant and less orthodox than their neighbours both to the north and the south, and allowed Mahomedans to build Mosques in cities in their kingdom, and also appointed them to high offices in the

government. This may certify to their religious tolerance, but not to their social wisdom and political sagacity.

The religion founded by Mohomod Paigambara Saheb in 622 A.D. spread very rapidly. The principle of brotherhood embodied in the religion appealed to the simple common people in the desert lands, and they embraced the new faith with zeal and eagerness. The wild and barbarous people in Arabia became civilized and devoted their lives with religious fervour to the cause of Islam. Persia was soon conquered by the sons of Islam, and the people were forcibly converted to the new faith. The Persians were civilized Aryans and professed a faith akin to Vedic Hindu religion. They worshipped the Sun and the Fire, and followed the ancient religion preached by Zoroaster. A few Persians declined to accept the brotherhood of Islam. They were consequently persecuted, and had to leave their motherland. India was familiar to them as the Persians carried on trade with India since the fourth century B.C. The Persians had several times invaded India, and colonized the coastal towns of Konkan, Guzerath and parts of Sind. The Vedic Hindu religion was very elastic in old times, and absorbed within its fold the few worshippers of Sun and Fire who had settled during the intervening period on the western coast of India. That was naturally the refuge sought by the Persians when persecuted by the followers of Islam. The Parsi refugees first came to Diwa in Kathiawada, and thence came to Sanjana in the year 766 A.D. when the Chalukyas of Badami were the overlords of the Deccan. Some Yadava feudatory chief of the Chalukyas, who was ruling in the northern part of Konkan, gave permission to these refugees to settle at that place. The Parsis built a fort-wall round their new colony, and named it Sanjana. The old name of the village has become extinct. Sanjana, though a small harbour, is a safe one. The Parsis gradually spread from Sanjana to Sopara, Bassein, Thana, Kalyan and Cheul as these were the principal trading ports on the western coast. But the main colony was at Sanjana. The Parsi Anjuman used to assemble there for deciding religious and social matters, and the name, Hanjamana city (Nagara), seems to be derived from Anjuman (meeting). In course of time, the Arab traders too settled there. The expression 'Hanjamana

Nagara-paura-Trivarga-Prabhritin' which occurs in several inscriptions of the Silahar kings evidently means 'the three classes of urban residents of the town Hanjamana'—Parsis, Arabs and Hindus mainly.

It is a pity that neither the Chalukyas nor the Rashtrakutas nor the later Chalukyas nor the Yadavas employed these clever and adventurous people in the administrative machinery of the State. They were attached to India which was their country by adoption, and which provided them with a shelter and a resting place in their hour of need. Maharashtra would have certainly profited by employing them to high offices in the State. For, their political circumstances had given them a broad outlook, sweet manners and an adventurous spirit.

The country seems to have been then divided into two clear-cut divisions—Northern India and the Deccan. Various languages were spoken and different religious creeds were professed in the land. The Rashtrakuta kings employed a regular army of elephants, cavalry and infantry though they relied mainly on their infantry for conducting wars. Their cavalry however had become notorious for carrying out sudden raids on the lands of the enemy with the speed of lightning, plundering their cities and swiftly returning home before the enemy was awakened as mentioned in the Cambay plates of Govinda IV. The army was regularly paid, testifying to the prosperity and good government of the kings. The Marathas were fairly good sailors too, having learnt the art from the Arabs and their Hindu neighbours on the east coast. Maharashtra developed thus by learning well the lessons taught by the Rashtrakutas.

## XI

### THE DRAVIDIAN KINGDOMS

THE constant wars waged by the Rashtrakutas with the Gurjara and the Paramara kings in the north and the purely Dravidian kings in the south, weakened their power considerably, and king Tailapa of the Chalukya dynasty defeated Karka II of the Rashtrakuta dynasty in 974 A.D. and captured Manyakhera. The Chalukya kings call him Kakkal, which is the Dravidian transformation of the name Karka. Tailapa married Jakkaba, the daughter of King Kakkal of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, and thus consolidated his power. The new Chalukyas had by this time become full-fledged Kanarese Kshatriyas and devout Shaivas, and traced their genealogical tables from the earlier Chalukya rulers of Maharashtra. These Chalukyas removed their capital to Kalyan in Kuntal, and ruled the country for over two hundred years. Tailapa was mainly the king of Kuntal, but he extended his dominions by conquering the feudatory chiefs in Maharashtra and also by waging wars against the Cholas, Andhras and the Utkalas. He waged constant wars with King Munja Paramar of Malwa, and finally killed him ignominiously while he was a helpless captive in his hands. These Chalukya kings were also waging constant wars with the Chola kings who were coming in prominence in the far south, and were the neighbours of the Chalukyas. Vikramaditya was the greatest of these later Chalukya kings. He married the Chola princess and also with Chandralekha, daughter of a Silahar prince of Karhataka, and gave his daughter in marriage to Jayakeshin Kadamba of Goa. His minister, Vijnaneshwara, wrote his famous commentary on Yajnavalkya Smriti known as "Mitakshara" which is considered as an authority on Hindu Law all over India except the province of Bengal. Vikrama's son Someshwara was as great a monarch as his father, and was a learned pundit himself. His work, "Manasollas" or "Abhilashitartha Chintamani", is a compendium of Science, Politics, Military Art, Poetry, Dialectics, Music and Astronomy. These Chalukyas assumed titles ending in

'Malla' such as Ahwamalla, Tribhuvanmalla, Bhuvanaikamalla, Trailokyamalla, etc. The Sindas of Yelburga, the Rattas of Saundatti, the Yadavas of Deogiri, the Poyasalas of Halebid, the Kakatiyas of Warangal, the Kadambas of Hangal and Goa, and the Silahars of Karhataka, were the feudatories of these later Chalukyas. The Silahars of Thana were however independent kings. The later Chalukyas were not as powerful as the earlier Chalukyas or the Rashtrakutas, as the Chola kings constantly challenged their power. The Cholas were Tamil Kshatriyas while the Chalukyas were Kanarese Kshatriyas. Maharashtra included Kuntala in those days. In fact Kuntala was considered to be one of the three Maharashtras. So the southern boundary of Maharashtra extended to the Tungabhadra river. The people in Kuntal spoke Kanarese though they knew both Sanskrit and the Prakrit Maharashtri. The contest for supremacy was thus confined to the Tamil and the Kanarese lands. The river Tungabhadra was the border between these two great kingdoms but a river cannot check the ambitions of powerful monarchs.

Mulraja founded the Chalukya kingdom in Anhilwada in 974 A.D., *i.e.*, the date when Tailap founded the later Chalukya dynasty after wresting the power from the Rashtrakutas. The Chalukyas of Anhilwada were not in any way related to the Chalukyas in the south. They belonged to the Rajaput clans. The great Mahipal of Bengal raised the tottering Pala power about this time. We have already seen that Munja Paramara of Malwa was a contemporary of Tailap. Rajraja Chola of the south rose to fame and prominence about this time. The Tamil country is a distinct part of India in climate, population and language. It is called Dravid Desha in Sanskrit literature, and at times referred to as Dramila in inscriptions. The three royal families of Chola, Pandya and Keral are mentioned even in Mahabharat, and are said to be descended from Turvasu, son of Yayati.

Rajaraja I ascended the throne in 985 A.D. He trained the Vellakurais who were good archers, and raised several regiments of those people. The armies which wield weapons having a longer reach are always successful against those which are armed with shorter weapons. The lance and the javelin proved more



powerful than the swords and the scimitars, and the bow surpassed all of them. The gun supplanted the bow in course of time. The army raised and trained by Rajaraja, proved invincible for a long time, and Rajaraja was soon able to extend his kingdom by conquering the Pandya, Keral and Pallava kings. He subjugated the Ganga kings, and fought with valour with the kings of Kudamalai (Coorg), Nolambavadi (Bellary), Vengi, Andhra and Kalinga. He defeated the Chalukya kings also, and became the emperor of the Deccan. The Tamil empire was thus called Chola-mandal as it contained many feudatory States owing allegiance to the great Chola kings. Coromandal is the corrupt form of Chola-mandal. These conquests added to his renown, power and wealth, and enabled him to build the superb and majestic Rajarajeshvara temple at Tanjore.

The Dravidians were very civilized people and had even in those early times irrigation works. The Kauveri canal was built by Rajaraja. The people prospered greatly under the Chola kings who were patrons of learning and fine arts. Great temples were built by the Chola kings in different places in the south which are all famous for their stupendous size and typical Hindu architecture. The temples at Kanchi, Madura, Shrirangam and Tanjore are typical examples of Hindu architecture. The Chola kings were extremely religious, and made numerous grants to Brahmin Pundits and temples. They were staunch orthodox Hindus, and persecuted the Budhists and the Jains, and later on even the Vaishnavas as they worshipped Siva only. The ensign of the Chola kings was a tiger, and they exhibited often the tiger-instincts in their wars. They were cruel in their dealings with the enemy. They were great administrators, and had an excellent system of revenue-collections based on the actual survey of the land. The Village Panchayats flourished, and helped the administration in keeping the common people happy, contented and peaceful.

Rajendra who succeeded Rajaraja was also a great ruler. He built a strong navy and conquered Ceylon, parts of Burmah and the Andamana and the Nicobar islands. The Dravidians were generally very good sailors, and sailed to the eastern islands and China for purposes of trade. They were mainly responsible

for carrying Hindu religion, Hindu mythology and Hindu culture to the Sumatra, Java and Bali islands and countries like Siam in the east. In fact, Hindu and Buddhist faiths were established in these parts long before the advent of the Mahomedans. The names of the islands and the places and the men therein can easily be traced to their Sanskrit originals. The old Javanese poems are full of Sanskrit words and the temples and the inside idols are Hindu-Budhistic in design. The Saliwahan era was also known in those lands.

The Chola kings and the Dravidian people were mainly responsible for the revival of Hindu religion. The Chola kings used their royal power in backing Hindu religion and suppressing other faiths. The languages in the south—Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalam—flourished under them and rose to great importance as the languages of the people.

But the Hindu kings and the Hindu people had no broad outlook. They were versed in religious philosophy, but had absolutely no knowledge of the geography and history of other countries. They could not understand the importance of contemporary events which happened in the countries on the borders of India. The idea of nationalism was foreign to them. They were fighting with one another for the satisfaction of personal ambitions and vain glories. While the Hindu kings were fighting among themselves the Mahomedans were gradually coming to the forefront. Their political advance was very rapid as can be seen from the following dates :—

Birth of Mohomod Paigambar Saheb	..	570 A.D.
The beginning of Hijari era	.. ..	622 A.D.
Mohalib's invasion of Punjab	.. ..	664 A.D.
Conquest of Sind by Mohomod Bin Kasim	..	712 A.D.

There was a temporary lull in the advance of the Mahomedans in India for nearly two hundred years, but the Hindu kings did not learn any wisdom from their past experience. They neither consolidated their power nor did they unite. The conquest of Sind was followed by a general massacre of the men of the warring tribes and the rape and enslavement of Hindu women. Proselytism was carried on at the point of the sword in Sind. But the Hindu kings and the Hindu people were not

awakened from their lethargy and hair-splitting quarrels. While the Chalukyas and the Cholas were fighting on the banks of the Tungabhadra, and the Chalukyas and the Paramaras were contesting for supremacy on the banks of the Nerbuda and the Gurjar kings of Kanouja were fighting against the Chalukyas of Anhilwada, the Mahomedans began their fresh inroads on India, and gained successive victories.

Jayapal, King of Punjab, was defeated by Sabaktgeen 991 A.D.

Mohomod became King of Gazni .. .. 999 A.D.

Mohomod's fourth invasion of India—Nagarkot .. 1008 A.D.

„ sixth „ Thaneshvar .. 1011 A.D.

„ twelfth „ Somnath .. 1024 A.D.

Mohomod invaded India 17 times between 999 and 1030, and every time he was victorious. The Hindu kings were busy in fighting among themselves for supremacy and establishing eras in their own honour after some petty victory. They not only fought amongst themselves but called the Mahomedan invaders to their help for crushing Hindu kings like themselves. They remained blind to their future destiny and took the help of foreigners against their own brethren. They persecuted the followers of Hindu sects other than their own and made friendly overtures with the warring Mahomedans in spite of events which happened in Sind. They learnt no lessons from past history. No doubt their doom was sealed.

## XII

### REVIVAL OF HINDUISM

**KUMARIL BHAT** was an Andhra Brahmin born in the year 740 A.D. He was a very learned pundit, and studied Jainism with Shri Niketana, a Jain monk. He also studied Budhism from the Budhist Bhikshus. He had studied the Vedas with their commentaries, and tried his best to revive the old Vedic Hindu religion full of sacrifices and rites. He was helped in this task by Mandan Misra. He himself thought that he was born to defeat the Budhist and Jain doctrines which were opposed to Vedic Hindu religion, and had a great hold on the people—‘श्रुत्यर्थधर्मविमुखान् सुगतान् निहन्तुम्’. He was considered by the people to be an incarnation of Kartikeya—the son of Shankar and the general of the Gods who defeated the demons. The Jains who were his religious opponents refer to him in their works as ‘महान् वादी महान् घोरः श्रुतीनाम् चाभिमानवान् । जिनानामन्तकः साक्षात् . . . a powerful debator and worshipper of Vedas and death incarnate of the Jain monks’, or as ‘जिनानां येन साधूना कृतं कंदनमद्भुतम् the miraculous pounder of the Jain monks’. “Shankar-Digvijay”, a work describing the religious exploits of Shankaracharya, compares Kumarila with a lion and the learned Jain monks with elephants—

‘कुमारील मृगेंद्रेण हतेषु जिनहस्तिषु

निष्प्रत्यूहमवर्धत श्रुतिशाखा समंततः’ ॥

The branches of Vedas spread all around without any obstacle when the elephants were killed by the lion. Kumarila died in 803 A.D., but his work was vigorously pushed forward by Shankaracharya who was a Nambudri Brahmin born in 788 A.D. in the Tamil land. Shankaracharya was an ascetic, and preached the importance of knowledge and renunciation. He was the father of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy, and wrote his famous commentary—the “Shankar-Bhashya”—on Bhagawat-Gita. Shankaracharya travelled throughout India, defeated the Budhist and the Jain monks in religious discussions and dissertations, and triumphantly carried the Hindu flag from Rameshvara to the Himalayas. He inaugurated the Panchayatana-Puja—worship of

the five Gods—Siva, Vishnoo, Ganesha, Shakti and Sun—and erected the famous shrine of the Goddess Kamakshi at Kanchi. He established Hindu monasteries at the four corners of India, the principal seat being at Shringeri in the south. The philosophy of the Upanishads again came into prominence. The philosophy of Shankaracharya can be summoned up as ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैवनापरः 'The Brahma is real while the world is unreal. The soul and Brahma are identical'. This positive philosophy appealed to the people more than the agnosticism (स्याद्वादा) of the Jains or the doctrine of nothingness (शून्यवाद) of the Budhists. The philosophy of Shankaracharya incorporated many of the essential doctrines of Buddhism. Shankaracharya also ridiculed the Karma-kanda (sacrifices and rites) of Hinduism like the Budhists, and considered knowledge (Dnyan), Asceticism (Tapa) and Renunciation (Sanyasa) as far more important for self-realization than the performance of daily rites and rituals. He was consequently criticized by the orthodox Hindus, and sometimes called a Buddhist monk in Hindu disguise (प्रच्छन्न बौद्ध). The works of Shankaracharya are numerous, and include commentaries on the 12 principal Upanishads and the Brahmasutras. He also wrote 65 hymns praising the various Hindu deities. He died in 820 A.D. when he was only 32 years of age, but his work survived and Hinduism received a fresh lease of life.

Ranganathacharya (850 to 920), Yamunacharya (920 to 1040), Ramanujacharya (1017 to 1137) and Madhwacharya (1197 to 1275) were the principal Acharyas who lived and wrote after Shankaracharya. They were Vaishnawas and the philosophy which they preached was the Vishishthadwaita and the Dwaita. Both of them were based on the duality of God and the world, and considered the individual soul as distinct from Bramha. The Dwaita Philosophy of Madhwacharya is a further specialization of the Vishishthadwaita Philosophy and is based on the principle of differentiation between God and soul, God and the world and life and body. Though the philosophies of these later Acharyas differed from that of Shankaracharya, they no doubt strengthened the cause of Hindu revival, but at the same time they also sowed seeds of dissension among the Hindus. The followers of Madhwacharya were called Vira-Vaishnavas—the

aggressive Vaishnavas—as opposed to the Vir-Shaivas, who were followers of the Lingayata sect founded by Basava about the year 1150 A.D. But the work of the revival of Hinduism among the common people was mainly done by the 63 Mahashaiva saints who lived between 600 and 1000 A.D., and the 12 Vaishnava Aluwers who lived sometime before 920 A.D. Tirudoyan Sambandar and Appar were the first two great Mahashaivas who lived sometime between 600 and 675 A.D. Sambandar was a learned Tamil Brahmin while Appar was an ordinary agriculturist, but they were great friends. Sambandar is worshipped as a deity by the Shaivas in the south. The collections of the religious writings and hymns of these Shaiva saints are called “Devaram”. The first three parts of “Devaram” contain the poems of Sambandar, the next three parts contain the hymns written by Appar and the seventh part contains the writings of Sundarmoorthy who lived about the year 920 A.D. Manikya Vasahara, Tiru Mullar and Nanda are the other great Shaiva saints, the first two being Brahmins and the last belonging to the untouchables. The poetic writings of these saints are exquisite and full of devotion. Their compositions were in Tamil, *i.e.*, the language of the people, and they lived very pure and simple lives. They were great lovers of mankind, and had the zeal of martyrs. All these 63 Shaiva saints have been idolized by King Rajendra Chola (who ruled from 1014 to 1044) in the famous temple of Rajarajeshvar at Tanjore. It is thus clear that all the 63 Shaiva saints lived sometime before 1000 A.D.

The worship of Shrikrishna was followed in India from very ancient times. The date of Bhagawat-Gita is supposed to be about 1000 B.C. Vasudeo, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha were considered to be the four forms (चतुर्व्यूह) of Shrikrishna alone. The same idea was expounded in the work “Pancha-ratra”, which was considered to be the authority on Vaishnavism in old days. The devotees of Vasudeo, Krishna or Vishnoo were called Bhagwats. The word Bhagwat is used in an inscription of the Gupta kings in the fifth century A.D. But the classical work ‘Bhagwata’ is not of an earlier date than the 10th century as it mentions the Yavana kings of Andhra. Some orthodox pundits however argue that the Bhagwata known to us

today is only an enlarged edition of a smaller work of an earlier date which has become extinct. The Bhagwata was always regarded as a very sacred work by the Vaishnavas. The Tamil Vaishnava saints either followed the doctrines in "Pancha-ratra" and "Bhagawat-Gita" or they had a knowledge of the original Bhagwata which was probably written almost at the same time as the present Ramayana and the Mahabharata. But the present Bhagwata is clearly classed with the other Puranas from internal evidence, and the same logic would lead us to believe that the other Puranas known to us at the present day are also simply enlarged editions of smaller works of old which have similarly become extinct. The hypothesis is thus proved to be absurd, and must therefore be rejected. The internal evidence alone clearly proves that the Puranas were written sometime between the 5th and the 15th centuries.

The God Siva and the Shaivas are ridiculed in Padma-purana while Vishnoo and the Vaishnavas suffer the same fate in Skanda-purana. They were evidently written when the controversy between the Shaivas and the Vaishnavas had become very bitter in the Deccan, *i.e.*, about the 12th century. Out of the 18 Puranas, 10 are in praise of the God Siva, 4 are in praise of Vishnoo, 2 are in praise of Bramha, and the other 2 are devoted to the Sun and Fire respectively. The Vayu-purana is probably the oldest of them all. The Bhagwata is of a later date than the Vishnoo-purana. In fact, the Vaishnava sect preceded the Bhagwata which is only a literary exposition of the greatness and philosophy of the sect.

The selected writings of the 12 Vaishnava saints have been similarly edited by Ranganathacharya or Natha-muni sometime before 920 A.D. This work is known as 'Prabhandam', which is considered by the Vaishnavas as a very holy work. ~~Pokakayi~~ Aluwar, ~~Thalwar~~ <sup>Chavita</sup> and ~~Peraluwar~~ <sup>Par</sup> probably lived in the third century A.D., though legends assign a far earlier date to them. They were contemporary saints and refer to Vishnoo as Narayana. Each of them wrote 100 hymns in praise of the God Narayana. They also refer to the temples of Shrirangam, Tirupati and Algarkoil. The temple of Shrirangam is the principal seat of the Vaishnava sect. King Kulashekhar of

Travancore and the author of the Sanskrit work "Mukundamala" was a royal Aluwar. He wrote 10 beautiful poems in Tamil which became very popular. The writings of Perialuwar and his daughter Andal are also full of love and devotion. The story of Andal is similar to that of Mirabai in the north. Both wanted to marry Shri Vishnoo alone. Among the Aluwaras Tirumangai was a Sudra, and Tiruppan was a Panchama. Nammalwar is considered to be the greatest of the Aluwaras. He wrote 1,000 hymns in praise of the God Vishnoo. The collection of his religious hymns is known as 'Tiruvoymoli'. All these Vaishnava saints raised Hinduism in the eyes of the common people as they lived very pure and devotional lives, and travelled throughout the country preaching the gospel of love, faith and devotion. Both the Shaiva and Vaishnava saints were often ridiculed and at times persecuted by the Jain and the Buddhist kings and their zealous officers, but their faith in Hinduism remained unshaken. The saints emphasized the devotional, and not the philosophical aspect of religion.

The result of Hindu revival was the expulsion of Buddhism from India. Buddhism first became extinct in the south, and then after lingering for some years in Behar, Bengal and Assam, entirely disappeared from the stage of Indian History. Jainism also lost ground, but the Jains in India, though numerically few, form an important community as they belong mostly to the mercantile and hence rich and influential Vaishyas of the country.

Hinduism could expand by converting Budhists and Jains back to the Hindu faith to which their ancestors originally belonged. Reconversion was thus practised on a large scale and Hinduism flourished. But it must be clearly stated that Hinduism never looked at Budhism and Jainism as entirely different religions. They were considered only as divergent sects of Hinduism. At least it was the Hindu view-point. The fundamentals of both Sankhya and Yoga schools of philosophy were acceptable to Hindus, Budhists and Jains alike. It is only in the subsequent treatment of the philosophical doctrines that Kumaril Bhat and Shankaracharya differed from the Buddhist and Jain Savants.

The revived Hindu religion was quite different from the old Vedic Hindu religion. Idol worship became predominant, and



the Vedic deities, Sun, Fire, Indra, Varun and the like, receded in the background. Temples were erected in honour of Siva, Vishnool, Ganesha, Devi in different places. Some of the Buddhist caves were converted into Hindu temples by removing the Stupas and substituting Hindu idols in their place. The temple of Ganesha at Lenyadri near Junnar and the images of the Hindu Gods in the Nasik caves are typical examples of this process of transformation. The four principal Varnas were divided into various castes and sub-castes which became fixed, rigid and immobile. Not only inter-marriages between different castes were prevented but even inter-dining too was prohibited. The ideas of caste-purity began to preponderate. Sacrifices were stopped, and Ahinsa (non-killing) was adopted as a religious doctrine by Hinduisim. Only Brahmins were allowed to study the Vedas and the Upanishadhas and to be Sanyasis, and women and Sudras were considered to be ineligible for study, sanyas and the attainment of Bramha. This was evidently a counter-action against Buddhism which opened the doors of 'Nirvana' to all men and women of all Varnas, but it weakened Hinduism and Hindu society to a considerable extent.

Alberuni who visited India and lived at Multan for a considerably long period wrote his book in 1030 A.D. He was a keen observer and a good student, and has left a vivid account of Hindu society of that age. Khurdadba who visited India about 900 A.D., states that Brahmins could take wives from Kshatriyas, and the Brahmin poet Rajashekhar actually married a Kshatriya princess about that time. Alberuni however writes : "Formerly a Hindu could marry a woman of his caste or a lower caste (Anulome), but at present a Hindu never marries a woman except from his own caste. Widows cannot re-marry. They either burn themselves on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands or lead an ascetic life. The widows of kings are usually burnt with their dead husbands unless they are old or have sons alive. The Hindus marry at an early age, and hence parents arrange for the marriages of their children. The Hindus marry with strangers and not with relatives (prohibition of Sagotra marriage)." The fifth class of the downtrodden Antyajas had come in existence at that time. The Antyajas were divided into two classes. The

upper class contained 8 sub-castes who freely inter-married with one another except the fuller, the shoemaker and the weaver. These eight castes were the (1) fuller, (2) shoemaker, (3) juggler, (4) basket- and shield-maker, (5) sailor, (6) fisherman, (7) hunter of wild animals and birds and (8) the weaver. "These castes live just near but outside the villages and the towns which are occupied by the four main castes. The people called the Hadi. Doma, Chandala and Badhatan are not reckoned in any caste. They are occupied with dirty work like the cleansing of the village. They are considered as one class only. They are considered to be the illegitimate children from Sudra fathers and Brahmin mothers, and are therefore outcastes." The castes were further subdivided after the visit of Alberuni and became absolutely rigid by the time Marco Polo visited India. Marco Polo visited India about the year 1280 A.D., and wrote his book of travels about the year 1300 A.D. The subdivisions among the Brahmins alone had then reached the figure of 50, the subdivisions being based on Achara, food, residence and race-descent. The Kshatriyas in the north alone were divided into 36 clans by King Chandra Gahadavala who ruled from 1080 to 1100 A.D. There are two lists of these clans in existence—the Rasa list and the Kumara-pala Charita list—which differ in minor details only. One of these 36 Rajput clans is named Huna, and the name leads one to believe that the Hun invaders were also absorbed by the Aryan Kshatriyas in the north as the Sakas, Kushans and Parthians were absorbed before. But the Rajput Kshatriyas now began to consider themselves superior to the Maratha Kshatriyas who in their turn looked down upon the Dravidian Kshatriyas, though all of them came from the north sometime or other and became absorbed in course of time among the southerners. The Silaharas of Thanā who called themselves Vidyadhara-Vanshi, and who styled themselves as Kshatriya-Shikha-Chudamani (the jewel of the crest) were the only southern Kshatriyas included in the 36 clans of the Rajaputs. The Silaharas came to Konkan from Tagarapura on the bank of the river Godavari. They claim to have descended from Jimutawahana, a legendary Vidyadhar who offered his own body to be devoured by Garuda as a compensation for liberating a Naga.

The Silaharas were probably the friends of the Nagas when the Aryans waged war with them for supremacy. The influence of the Nagas can be traced in Konkan and Mavala by the various images found in the subterranean caves and passages in the Sahyadri forts. Following the Rajputs in the north the Maratha Kshatriyas also divided themselves into 96 principal clans. Others were considered as Vaishyas and Sudras, who were again subdivided into numerous castes all rigid and immobile. Inter-dining is not prohibited by the Smritis, at least among the sub-castes, but custom prevailed over religion in this particular (शास्त्रात् रुढीर्बलीयसी). The castes were arranged in the imaginary order of superiority which often gave rise to bad blood among the different castes. There was a craze in the southern and eastern countries for the importation of the supposed pure Aryan Brahmins and Kshatriyas from the Indo-Gangetic Valley in the north, as the local Brahmins and Kshatriyas were considered to be inferior due to their inter-marriages with the southerners. The Sena kings—Samanta and Ballala, invited 5 Brahmin and 5 Kshatriya families from Kanouja for settling in Bengal. Brahmins from Northern India settled in Orissa in the days of the Kesari kings. King Mulraja of Gujeratha also invited the Brahmins from Northern India to settle there. The Nagarkotia Brahmins also believe that they were invited by a Katoch king for settlement. The Chola king is also supposed to have done the same.

The Greeks ruled in Andhra-desh from about 575 to 904 A.D. They are referred to as Kainkila Yavanas in the Vishnoo and Bhagawata-puranas. Vindhya-shakti was a great king of this dynasty. The capital of this kingdom was at Warangal, and these Yavana kings reached the height of their power about 782 A.D. They were Hinducized, and belonged to the Buddhist religion. They spoke Telugu and Sanskrit too though they knew the Yavani language. It seems from contemporary records of the eighth century as quoted by Colebrook that Yavana (Greek), Parasika (Persian), Romaka (Latin) and Barabara (Arabian or African or both) were the four non-Aryan languages with which the Hindus were familiar in those days, as people in all these lands carried on an extensive trade with

India. When the Chalukya kings conquered Andhra, they took with them many Maharashtra Brahmins to that country for settling there. The Chalukya kings were partial to Karnataka in general, but they too considered the Maharashtra Brahmins as superior to the Kanarese on account of their Aryan descent. These are the Niyogis of Andhra. The Silahar kings of Konkan also seem to have invited both the Brahmins and Kshatriyas from the north for settling in the south about this time. They are the Gauda Sarasvata Brahmins and the Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhus of Konkan. The Brahmins and Kshatriyas who migrated at this period formed themselves into separate sub-castes in their adopted new homes, as the caste-system had become very rigid at that time. The Gauda Sarasvata Brahmins and the Kayastha Prabhus are naturally often referred to as 'Aryas' which is corrupted to 'Aiyyas' in the inscriptions. The local Brahmins were referred to as 'Bhats', and the imported northerners as Aryas or Aiyyas.

Marco Polo has left a glowing account of the Lad (learned) Brahmins who lived in Konkan. The word 'Lad' is a corrupt form of 'Lat' which means learned. He says :—"All these Brahmins come from the country on the west. They are very good merchants and are very truthful. They eat no flesh and drink no wine, and lead a life of chastity. They wear a cotton-thread on their shoulders which crosses the chest and the back. They are sent by their rich and powerful king to purchase diamonds and pearls in the Chola country. They believe in bad and auspicious hours for every week day, and transact business at auspicious times only. They are long-lived as they are very abstemious." The Brahmins in Konkan were thus famous for their adventurous spirit from very old times. Like their Parsi brethren they travelled throughout India, and were engaged in trade-missions. They were clever in mundane affairs rather than in religious texts.

### XIII

#### THE YADAVAS OF DEOGIRI

THE Chalukya power began to decline from 1138 A.D., and Vijjala, who was the commander-in-chief of the Chalukyas, rose in rebellion against his master. He was helped by Vijayarka, a Samanta of Kolhapur, and also by a Kakatiya king of Telangana. Tailapa II, the ruling Chalukya king, was defeated and deposed. He retired to Annigeri in the Dharwad district, and ruled over a small tract there. He was ousted from Annigeri too in 1162 by Vijjala, and had to retire further south to Banavasi. Vijjala who was a Kalachuri, declared himself as an independent king of Maharashtra, and ruled at Badami. But this new king did not live long to enjoy the fruit of his rebellion against his master. Vijjala was a Jain while his prime minister Basava was a Brahmin. Basava was a great religious reformer and gave his sister Padmavati in marriage to the Kshatriya king. Basava soon founded the Vira-Shaiva or the Lingayata sect. He adopted Ahinsa as his main doctrine, and thus satisfied the general trend of public opinion which was entirely in favour of non-slaughter, and by which the Jains profited. He declared himself against Varnashram-dharma, and denied the special sanctity of Brahmins. He preached the entire abolition of castes, and encouraged inter-marriages between the Brahmins and Chandalas also. He was the first preacher of the dignity of labour, and insisted on a strictly moral life for all people. According to his tenets any man or woman could attain Kailasa—the final goal—by honest (Kayaka) work alone. He substituted the wearing of a Siva-linga on the person for the sacred thread. He imposed a higher esoteric meaning on the worship of the Linga emblem. He also adopted Kanarese as the medium of expression for his new faith. The new faith thus became very popular, and consequently both Hinduism and Jainism lost ground in Karnataka. Both men and women had to undergo a special Upanayana ceremony, and learn the new Gayatri Mantra—‘ओम् नमः शिवाय Bow to the Great Siva’.

The religious revolution led to a political revolution, soon after, but conflicting accounts are given by Jain and Lingayata writers about the various incidents which culminated in the murder of the ruling king Vijjala. The attempts of the Chalukyas to regain their lost power proved abortive, and the different Viceroys in the Deccan proclaimed their independence in 1189. The most prominent among them were the Yadavas of Deogiri, the Poyasalas of Dwara-Samudra (Halebid) and the Kakatiyas of Warangal. All the three dynasties of course claimed descent from the solar and lunar Aryans in the north, and considered themselves as distant kinsmen of the Rajputs. The Kakatiyas were however distinctly Andhra Kshatriyas though they claimed descent from the solar race. The Yadavas and the Poyasalas were both Maharashtra Kshatriyas, and the Yadavas traced their genealogy to the God Shrikrishna. The Yadavas might have been connected with the Gopas who lived in Maharashtra at the time of Mahabharat (गोपराष्ट्र) and the Abhiras who ruled in Khandesha at a subsequent date. The Gopas and the Abhiras were the predecessors of the Yadavas, and both of them claimed kinship with Shrikrishna. As the letters B (ब) and V (व) are often interchanged in Sanskrit (बवयोर्सावर्ण्यम्) on account of their similarity of sound and diction so the letters H (ह) and P (प) are often interchanged in Kanarese (हपयोर्सावर्ण्यम्) and the name Poyasalas was in course of time corrupted to Hoyasalas in the southern Kanarese country where they were ruling. The Poyasala Kshatriyas who remained in Maharashtra proper or again came back to Maharashtra from the far south, were called in later days the Bhosalas—a natural corruption from the word Poyasalas. Probably the Bhojas of Maharashtra when they moved further south became in course of time the Poyasalas. Both the Yadavas and the Poyasalas thus belonged to the 96 best Kshatriya clans of Maharashtra, though their kinship with the Rajputs was distant and more fictitious than real.

A struggle for supremacy between these three kings was inevitable as their frontiers met one another. The Poyasalas were victorious at first, Vira Ballal having gained a great victory at Lakhundi in Dharwar district in 1192. But Sindhana or Singhana II or Sinharaja who succeeded to the Yadava throne in 1210 after

the death of his father Jaitrapala raised the Yadava dynasty to its greatest power. He successfully carried his campaigns against Malwa and Guzerath, and conquered Konkan and also wrested Kuntala, the southern Maratha country, from the hands of the Poyasalas. Sindhana died in 1247, and was succeeded by his grandson Krishna Raja II. The inscriptions state that he defeated the Poyasalas and the kings of Malwa. His brother Mahadeoraj ascended the throne in 1260, and waged a successful war with Someshvara Silahar, king of Konkan. Someshvara was defeated and driven from the Konkan coast. Thereupon he sought refuge in his ships, but the navy of King Mahadeoraja pursued him, and destroyed his ships. Someshvara was drowned in this naval battle, and lost his life. The Marathas knew the importance of naval warfare even in these early times.

It is a strange and sad phenomenon in history that Shahabuddin Mohomod Ghori was consolidating his power in Northern India by the conquests of the Punjab and Sind between the years 1176 to 1188 while the Chalukya power in the south was tottering to pieces, and the different viceroys who were scrambling for power in the south paid no heed whatsoever to this alarmingly growing Mahomedan menace. He invaded India in 1191, and was defeated by King Prithviraj of Dehli at Thaneshvara. But in 1192 he won his great victory over Prithviraj on the same battle-field, and became King of Dehli. In 1194 he destroyed the great ancient kingdom of Kanouja by defeating King Jayachanda at Kalpi, and by slaying him. In 1195 he invaded India again and conquered the fertile Indo-Gangetic plain as far as Benares, and destroyed the Hindu temples and broke the idols to pieces. His generals conquered Bayana in 1195, Gwalior in 1196, Kalingar and Mahoba in 1202. Mohomod Bakhtyarkhan conquered Bengal and Behar in this very period after routing the army of the Pala king Laxmana Sena, who thereupon fled to the temple of Jagannatha on the eastern coast for protection. After Mohomod Ghori's death, his general Kutubuddin became the first great Sultan of Delhi in 1206 A.D. The Mahomedans had practically become rulers of Northern India when the great Singhana Yadava ascended the throne of Deogiri in 1210. But the Yadavas were busily

engaged in waging wars with their Hindu Kshatriya neighbours and amassing wealth by plundering other kings and countries, quite unmindful of the terrible incidents which were happening in the north. By 1271, *i.e.*, the date of ascension of Ramadevaraja to the Deogiri throne, it had become abundantly clear that the Mahomedan power was the strongest in the land, and that the Hindu kings and their soldiers were no match for the armies of the Sultans of Delhi. The Mahomedans evidently wanted to conquer the whole of India and to convert the land to the Islamic faith. Sacred Hindu temples in the north were razed to the ground, and the Hindus were either massacred or forcibly converted to Islam in the wake of the Mahomedan conquest. And neither the King Ramadevaraja nor his able minister Hemadri realized the situation and made any special preparation to face or evade the Mahomedan onslaught. Instead of making a Holy Hindu alliance of all kings in the south, the Yadavas were busy in waging wars against their Hindu neighbours and thus weakening themselves and others.

The Yadava kingdom reached its zenith of power under Ramadevaraja who was the son of Krishnaraja and nephew of Mahadeoraja, and ascended the throne in 1271 after the death of his uncle Mahadeoraja. He ought to have ascended the throne after the death of his father in 1260, but probably he was deprived of his rights then by his uncle Mahadeoraja. Ramadevaraja was perhaps a minor at that time. But it seems that on ascending the throne he avenged himself on his uncle by first burning the eyes of his cousin Aman, son of Mahadeoraja, and then putting him to death. The Mahanubhao works brought this cruel fact to light. It is indeed a dark stain on the otherwise glorious reign of Ramadevaraja for the first 20 years after his ascension. His armies marched victoriously against Malwa and Mysore, and brought wealth and prosperity to the homeland. Hemadpanta or Hemadri was his able Brahmin minister. He is supposed to have introduced the Modi script of writing in Maharashtra. He also encouraged the cultivation of Bajri, one of the staple crops of Maharashtra. The Hemadpanti style of Hindu architecture is evidently named after him. The wisdom of Hemadpanta increased the prosperity of the people and filled the coffers of the king



with gold and jewels. Hemadri was a very learned pundit and wrote a number of works, the most important of them being "Chaturvarga-Chintamani", "Kaivalya-Dipika" (a commentary on the book "Muktaphala" written by his friend Boapadeva), "Ayurveda-Rasayana" and "Raja-prashasti" (a historical sketch in honour of the Yadava kings). The "Chaturvarga-Chintamani" is a voluminous work which deals exhaustively with Hindu religious rites and rituals. Over 2,000 religious rituals and festivals are described in this work. The religious rituals and festivals had multiplied so fast since the days of Shankaracharya that a staunch Hindu had to observe and perform more than five 2,000/365 extra special rituals on an average per day. The Hindus in Maharashtra had become wealthy and therefore indolent, and wasted their time in observing the various religious commands as laid down in a consolidated form in the "Chaturvarga-Chintamani" while the Mahomedans were knocking at their doors. The Brahmin supremacy had degenerated into a Brahmin tyranny, and a revolt against the caste-system was inevitable. The religious revolution was this time started by the Vaishnavas under the leadership of Chakradhara as the earlier revolution was started by Basava who was a Shaiva. The story of Parakaya-pravesha—the transmigration of soul from one person to the body of another person—as related by the disciples of Chakradhara need not be believed. He was dissatisfied with the existing state of society, and ingeniously combined the Sanyasa-marga of Shankaracharya with the devotional aspect of Madhwacharya, and followed Basava in enunciating the principles of equality first between men and women and secondly between all castes. Chakradhara certainly did not belong to Guzeratha as is supposed by some of his followers who identify Bharavas (capital of the province over which he once ruled) with modern Bharoach. Ramtek had only a local reputation as a place of pilgrimage, and had not the all-India importance of places of pilgrimage like Benares, Rameshvara, Ayodhya or Mathura. So a king of Guzeratha would hardly choose Ramteka as a place of pilgrimage. Secondly, his disciples were mainly drawn from Berar where the sect flourished. Thirdly, he preached in Marathi, and never in Guzerathi, showing that his mother-tongue was

Marathi. The story of his having lost the way and reached Ridhipura instead of Ramteka would lead one to the natural inference that the Mahanubhao town 'Bharawas' is the same as 'Bhokardhana' which is quite close to the western border of Berar and is at present included in the Nizam's Dominions. The story thus divested of the miraculous exaggerations of his disciples is given below. The lives of all saints and prophets in the world are wrapped in miraculous garments by their devotees, and Chakradhara is no exception to that general rule. His disciples, therefore, need not be criticized mercilessly for these embellishments. Chakradhara was probably a petty chief of Bharawas a small town in Berar and was proceeding to Ramteka on a pilgrimage. But he lost his way in the forest at night and reached Ridhipura in Berar instead, where he met Govinda Prabhu, a great Vaishnava saint, and became his disciple in 1263. Krishna and Dattatreya were the principal Gods worshipped by the followers of Govinda Prabhu. Chakradhara was a very learned man, and his personal magnetism soon attracted a number of disciples. About 500 disciples, 13 of them being women, gathered round Chakradhara between 1263 and 1272. His followers were called the Mahanubhaos and the sect founded by him is called the Mahanubhao sect. Chakradhara tried to abolish the obnoxious caste-system in Hinduism, and emphasized renunciation (Sanyasa), for attaining the highest goal. All men and women were treated by him alike and everyone had a right of being a Sanyasi for self-realization. The fame of Chakradhara soon spread throughout the land, and it appears that King Krishnadeva Yadava went on a pilgrimage to Ridhipura with his brother Mahadeva with the special object of paying his respects personally to Chakradhara whose fame for learning, penance and pure asceticism had reached his ears. The sect naturally got many adherents from the non-Brahmins as it tried to raise their status and place them on an equal footing with the Brahmins. The women also felt that by embracing the Mahanubhao sect their religious inclinations would have full scope for development. The sect was humanitarian and preached universal brotherhood. Ahinsa or non-slaughter was also a cardinal principle of this sect. This shows the great influence which

Buddhism and Jainism had on the Hindus. The sect prospered under the Yadava kings who were very liberal in their religious views, and were great patrons of learning. Consequently the Mahanubhao literature flourished under the patronage of the Yadavas. Nagadevacharya and Mahindra Vyasa were the great disciples of Chakradhara. Mahindra Vyas has written the life of Chakradhara known as "Leela-charitra" which contains an account of 1,500 events in the life of Chakradhara. Keshavarajasure or Keshava Vyasa was the disciple of Mahendra Vyasa, and he has edited the "Sidhanta-sutra-patha", which is a collection of 1,609 sutras (propositions) casually enunciated by Chakradhara on various occasions when he was living. This work is based on "Leela-charitra".

Chakradhara and his followers were very largely misunderstood by the orthodox Hindus who were staunch supporters of idol-worship and Chaturvarnya. This is the general fate of all religious reformers. A quarrel arose between the orthodox Brahmins headed by Hemadri and the Mahanubhao disciples of Chakradhara. The king supported Hemadri while the Mahanubhaos had influence with the queen and the other inmates in the palace. These two factions were fighting for power at Deogiri in the last years of Ramadevaraja's reign, and these internal dissensions were to a certain limited extent responsible for the defeat of the Yadavas. The caste-system had taken such a deep root in Hindu society that the Virashaiva and the Mahanubhao sects which were started with a view of abolishing the caste-system, were in the end responsible for adding two more castes to the existing number. The Virashaivas were divided into sub-castes—Jangamas and others, and the Mahanubhaos also added their own tribute to the existing caste-system among the Hindus.

The Yadavas were also the patrons of Marathi and Sanskrit literature and fine arts. Sharanga-dhara who wrote the famous work on music known as "Sangita-ratnakara" lived in the reign of king Jaitrapala or Jayantapala. The first Marathi poet, Mukundaraja, was the preceptor of the prince Jayantapala Yadava. In fact, the Marathi language came into prominence for the first time under the Yadava rule. Dnyaneshvara, the greatest saint of Maharashtra and the founder of Bhagwat-

dharma in Maharashtra, was a contemporary of Ramadevaraja Yadava. Dnyaneshvara refers to this great king as 'the dispenser of justice and the abode of all arts' in his great work "Dnyaneshwari", which reached completion in 1290 A.D. Ramadevaraja and his minister Hemadri liberally helped the repairs of the temple at Pandharpura.

Ramadevaraja was undoubtedly a generous and good king. The only stain on his long reign is the sad story of the murder of his cousin. Ramadevaraja was probably very young at that time and committed that crime in a fit of sudden anger. Perhaps Amana rebelled against him, and he was obliged to punish him for high treason in self-defence. Had he not got some such justification for his action the great saint Dnyaneshvara would not have praised him in such glowing terms.—

“तेथ यदुवंश विलासु । जो सकळ कळानिवासु ।

न्यायाते पोषी क्षितीषु । श्रीरामचन्द्र ॥

But though he was a good and generous ruler, and ruled his kingdom with justice, and encouraged literature and arts, he was not an able and farsighted ruler. His minister Hemadri was extremely learned and a staunch Hindu, but he was neither a statesman nor a diplomat. Both of them failed to consolidate the Yadava power even after a glorious reign of 23 years in an extremely prosperous and rich country.

The Khilji dynasty established itself at Delhi in 1290, and Alauddin Khilji who was a nephew of the reigning Sultan and an ambitious and able general, turned towards the south in 1294. He obtained permission from his uncle to attack the Rajput fortress of Chanderi to the north of the Vindhyadri. In the course of his campaigns in central India he heard stories about the splendour of the royal court at Deogiri and the great wealth accumulated there. He thereupon passed Chanderi and crossed the Vindhyadri and the Satpura with an army of 8,000 horse-men, and soon reached Ellichpur after rapid marches. He told the Hindu residents that he had quarrelled with his uncle, and was going to serve the Hindu kings. The credulous and foolish Hindus believed him though they had heard many stories of Mahomedan treachery in the bygone days. They gave him provisions, and allowed him to camp near their city and take rest. After a few

days Alauddin struck his tents and soon marched towards Deogiri. Ramadevaraja was completely taken by surprise. His eldest son Shankaradeva was on a pilgrimage with his mother. Ramadeva hastily gathered 40,000 soldiers and faced Alauddin, but he was defeated and had to shut himself in the citadel. Alauddin spread a rumour that the main portion of the army of the Sultan of Delhi was following him close behind, and it was 20,000 strong. The feudatory chiefs of the Yadava king did not dare to come to his help. Shankaradeva heard of the predicament in which his father was placed, and rushed to Deogiri with the army which he could collect. But Alauddin's stratagem again won the battle. He left a small army of 1,000 troopers behind him to attack Ramadeva in case he left the fort and marched boldly with the rest of his army to punish Shankaradeva. At a critical moment in the fight his reserved troopers came to his help. The Hindu soldiers thought that the main army of the Sultan of Delhi was coming to Alauddin's help. They were seized with panic and fled in all directions. The provisions in the fort of Deogiri were inadequate, and it was not possible for the garrison to hold out for long. Many bags in the storehouse which were supposed to be full of grain were found to contain salt instead. Ramadeva had to sue for peace, and as a price of the peace offered to cede the province of Ellichpur and give a ransom of 600 maunds of gold, 2 maunds of jewels, 1,000 maunds of silver and 4,000 pieces of the gold-embroidered silk-cloth Paithany, named after the town where it was largely manufactured. The Yadava kings were the powerful liege-lords of the Deccan, and still they could not muster an army strong enough to defeat a small army of 8,000 troopers which had come in the heart of the Hindu territory, and was practically cut off from its far distant base in the north. The Yadava kings were fighting in their own kingdom, and the Hindu soldiers knew every inch of the battlefield and the surrounding country from the standpoint of military strategy while Alauddin was a novice to the Deccan, and his army had to fight against odds in an unknown and unfriendly land. The Yadavas in fact were unprepared for the invasion though they had noticed several Hindu kingdoms having succumbed to the Mahomedan aggressions during the past

100 years of Mahomedan rule in the north. This clearly shows that the Hindu army had neither morale nor heart in fighting for the defence of the home-land, king and religion. The Hindus were also inferior to the Mahomedans in bravery and military skill. The doctrine of Ahinsa which ruled India for more than a thousand years had completely unnerved them. They were eager to fight with their co-religionists for plunder and nominal glory, but the Hindu army crumbled to pieces like a house of cards when the soldiers were asked to face a gallant foreign foe. The Hindu soldiers could not give any valiant stand in any decisive action, though they showed their skill in carrying furtive raids and plundering expeditions against their Hindu neighbours.

Alauddin on his return to Delhi murdered his uncle and became the emperor of India. On accession to the throne he invaded the Rajputs and conquered Ratanbhore and Chitore. The garrison at Chitore defended the fort very gallantly, but they were forced to surrender it in 1304. The ladies in the fort burnt themselves to death, preferring Johar to an unchaste life in the harem of some Mahomedan nobleman, and the Rajputs desperately attacked the enemy and were all cut to pieces. War was declared against Chitore for capturing the beautiful Padhmini, the queen of Rana Bhimsinga, whose beauty attracted the amorous attention of the Mahomedan Emperor. Alauddin wished to convert Padhmini to Islam and then to marry her. But the Rajput queen preferred death to a life of unchastity and dishonour. Her glory was shared by other Rajput women in Chitore.

Alauddin was determined to conquer the Deccan, and he sent his general Malik Kafur to subdue Guzeratha. Karan Waghela was then the king of Guzeratha. His army was routed, and though a Rajput, he fled from the battlefield. His capital Anhilwad Patan was soon after subdued. His wife Kamaladevi was captured by the Mahomedans and sent to Delhi. There she became the mistress of Alauddin, and reconciled herself to a life of luxury in the Sultan's harem. Karan Waghela had a young daughter Devaldevi who was then five years of age. Fortunately she escaped notice and was taken by a faithful servant to King Karan who was in flight. Guzeratha was com-

pletely conquered in 1296, and became a province of the Mahomedan empire.

Karan Waghela sought shelter at the court of King Ramadeva Yadava who treated him kindly and gave him the fort of Bagalana in the Nasik district as his place of residence, and the surrounding country was created into a small principality for him. Ramadevaraja Yadav requested King Karan Waghela to give his daughter in marriage to his eldest son, Shankaradeva. But King Karan was very proud of his Rajput lineage, and considered the Yadavas as far inferior to his family in caste, though they were the lords of the Deccan and had given him shelter when he was in dire distress. He therefore rejected the request of Ramadevaraja. It is true that the Marathas and the Rajputs once belonged to a common stock, but the Marathas freely mixed and inter-married with the Dravidian Kshatriyas when they settled down in the Deccan and were therefore looked down with contempt by the Rajputs.

Kamaladevi had won the favour of Alauddin, and had become his favourite Begum by 1306. She was happy but felt that her happiness would not be completed until her daughter Devaldevi was also brought to her. She requested Alauddin accordingly, and as the emperor wanted some pretext or other for invading the Deccan a second time he immediately despatched his general Malik Kafur with a large army to the Deccan and enjoined him to capture Bagalana and bring the princess Devaldevi to the Delhi Court. Malik Kafur was also asked to collect the annual tributes which King Ramadeva had failed to pay for some years. Alaf Khan who was the Governor of Guzeratha, was also ordered to march against Deogiri in support of Malik Kafur. The Mahomedan army besieged Bagalana. Karan Waghela tried to defend it as best as he could. For two months he succeeded in bravely defending the fort against the Mahomedan hordes. But as the provisions ran short, he had to leave his stronghold and fly to Deogiri on a dark night. His escape was soon discovered, and his small band of soldiers was hotly pursued by the Mahomedans. In this sad predicament he decided to give his daughter who was now a beautiful maiden of 15 years of age in marriage to Shankaradeva, rather than

allow her to be a concubine of a Mahomedan prince like her mother. But alas ! his decision was taken too late ! While retreating from Bagalana he sent Devaldevi by a separate route to Deogiri for safety, as he knew full well that he would be pursued. But a party of Mahomedan soldiers 300 strong had slipped away from the main army on a visit to the Ellora caves. On their return journey they came across the Hindu escort that accompanied Devaldevi. The Afgan soldiers boldly attacked the party and routed them and took the beautiful princess to Alaf Khan who immediately took her to Delhi. A few weeks after her arrival at Delhi the emperor's son Khizar Khan fell in love with her and married her. Her own mother now became her mother-in-law, and the luxuries in the palace soon reconciled her to her new glorious life as the future empress of India.

Malik Kafur defeated the Maratha army on the way, and soon reached Deogiri. King Ramadeva was convinced that further resistance was useless ; and he presented himself at the camp of the Mahomedan general, and agreed to pay full arrears of the tribute and also an ample indemnity in addition. Peace was soon concluded, and Ramadeva soon afterwards visited Delhi in person. He was received with great honour by Alauddin who conferred on him the title of *Ray-i-Rayan* or Hindu king of kings. He was allowed to return home and rule Deogiri as a feudatory king. He was also appointed as Governor of Navasari district in Guzeratha as a vassal of the emperor.

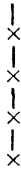
Malik Kafur then decided to reduce the Kakatiyas of Warangal. The forces of Ramadeva joined him as he was now a vassal of the Mahomedan emperor. The King of Warangal organized a strong defence, but ultimately he had to open negotiations for peace. Malik Kafur triumphantly returned to Delhi with 300 elephants, 7,000 horses and a large store of gold and jewels as a tribute to the emperor from the Kakatiyas of Warangal. Soon after this event King Ramadeva died. He ruled for 38 years, and though he began his reign as an independent king of Maharashtra and the overlord of the Deccan, he ended his career as a loyal vassal of the Mahomedan emperor. He helped the Mahomedans to conquer other Hindu kings in the last years of his reign.



Consequent upon Malik Kafur's departure from the Deccan, Harapaladeva who was the son-in-law of Raja Ramdeva, raised a rebellion in Maharashtra against the Mahomedan power. He raided and overpowered most of the Mahomedan garrisons stationed in the vicinity and ruled in Maharashtra for a year. Alauddin in the meanwhile died either a natural death due to old age or was poisoned by Malik Kafur in 1316. Anarchy prevailed in Delhi after Alauddin's death, and no one could pay any attention to the rebellion in Maharashtra. But Mubarak who was Alauddin's fourth son ultimately succeeded in restoring order at Delhi, and became the emperor in 1317. Mubarak's general Ainulmulk conquered Rajputana and Guzeratha in 1317, and Mubarak himself invaded the Deccan in 1318. Harpaladeva's Hindu allies deserted him as soon as the emperor arrived in the Deccan, and Harapaladeva had to flee for safety towards the Sahyadri hills. But he was captured and brought in the presence of the emperor who ordered him to be flayed alive. His head was then cut off and fixed over the main gate of Devagiri. The great Hindu kingdom of Maharashtra thus came to an inglorious end in 1318.

#### YADAVAS OF DEOGIRI

Simharaja or Sindhan or Seunchandra



Bhillam or Ballal (1187-1191)

Jayantapala or Jaitrapala or Jaitugi (1191-1210)

Sindhan (1210-47)

Jaitrapala or Jaitugi II

Kannhardeva or Krishnadeva  
(1247-60)

Mahadeva  
(1260-71)

Ramachandra or Ramadeva (1271-1309)

Aman

Shankardeva (1309-12)      daughter = Harapaladeva (1316-18)      Bimba or Bhima (went to Konkan)

## XIV

### THE BIRTH OF MARATHI

MARATHI is no doubt a Sanskritic language being derived from the Prakrit Maharashtri. Some scholars recognize Apabhramsha as a definite landmark between Maharashtri and Marathi. But no work written in Maharashtri Apabhramsha exists today, and none of the inscriptions can be definitely assigned to that language. A language does not change all of a sudden in one day into a new language. The change from Maharashtri to Marathi must have been gradual, and at any time the change must have been almost imperceptible. A language often changes its aspect with a change in the history of the country where it is spoken. Distance differentiates one dialect from another, and it is in this sense that a language is said to change after every 25 miles. Different occupations associated with different castes have also their effect on language. The language spoken by the cultured and educated classes is different in tone from the same language as spoken by the uncultured and uneducated classes. The language spoken by males is different in tone from that spoken by females. Time, distance, sex, caste, history and neighbourhood are the various factors which slowly but surely transform a language. The changes are called Apabhramshas. But in course of time the Apabhramshas gather strength, and they change the original language beyond recognition, though the change is slight from day to day. When such a stage arrives the new language gets a new nomenclature by which it is afterwards recognized and is followed by its own grammar and develops in its own way. It is therefore not necessary from a strictly scientific standpoint to recognize the Apabhramsha stage as an intermediary between Maharashtri and Marathi. The Prakrit Maharashtri was recognized as an independent language about the fourth century B.C. while Marathi seems to have attained this status about the 11th century A.D. Any intermediate stage during the long period of 1,500 years would show Apabhramshas, though their number and varieties would be different at different periods of history.

It seems that Telugu, Tamil and Kanarese flourished in the Deccan long before the birth of Marathi. This is quite natural as they were the languages of the old Dravidian residents of the Deccan while Marathi was gradually evolved from Maharashtra and Sanskrit, which were the languages used by the Aryan invaders of the Deccan when they came to the south. Marathi was evolved when they settled down in Maharashtra. Maharashtra is thus the land of birth of Marathi language. Kanarese is used by one of the dramatic characters in a Greek drama written in the second century A.D. A specimen of Kanarese poetry can be found in the stone inscription at Chitradurga of the fifth century A.D. Samantabhadra who lived about the year 416 A.D. was the first Kanarese writer. He is also known as Shri Vijaya. He was a Brahmin convert to Jainism. The Garga and the Chalukya kings recognized Kanarese as a language of the ruled, and their inscriptions are both in Sanskrit and Kanarese. The inscriptions of Chalukya Mangalesha are written in classical Kanarese. The poet Chandra wrote his poems about the Vaishnava Sect in Kanarese in the sixth century. Tamil was developed earlier than Kanarese. 'Kalitha Thokai', a collection of 150 love songs, is a Tamil work composed before the beginning of the Shaliwahan era. There are many other Tamil ballads composed in the second and the third centuries. Pirli, son of a Brahmin Vedamauli, married an Antyaja woman and had seven children from her, four being daughters and three sons. All these children became learned and wrote in Tamil. 'Vyaluvar Kolar' is a well-known Tamil poem written by Tem-Velluvar, one of these seven children. Stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata were written in Tamil, and even the Vishnu Purana was translated in Tamil in the sixth century. The Shaiva and Vaishnava saints who were all born before 1000 A.D. wrote in Tamil. The first Telugu writer was Kanva who wrote probably in the third century when the Andhra kings were in power. Hiuen Tsang mentions that the Andhras had a language of their own written in an alphabet which did not much differ from that of the north. Nannayya Bhatta lived in the reign of King Vishnuvardhan who was a great patron of Telugu literature. King Vishnuvardhan ruled from 1022 to 1066. Nannayya Bhatta translated Maha-

bharata in Telugu, and was also the first great grammarian of that language. Telugu, Tamil and Kanarese flourished soon, because the kings in the far south generally belonged to the people and spoke the languages of the masses. In contrast, the Andhra-bhrityas and the Rashtrakutas were sons of the soil of Maharashtra but they did not belong to the people. The Andhra-bhrityas were partly Pattanikas and partly Nagas, and were the feudatories of the Andhras. The Rashtrakutas though of a mixed blood were proud of their Aryan descent and claimed kinship with the north, though the northerners treated them with scorn and kept them aloof. The different races in Maharashtra were not completely fused also in the early days. The Rashtrakutas delighted in using Sanskrit in their inscriptions as they considered it below their dignity to write in the language of the masses. The Chalukyas on the other hand, though Aryans, identified themselves with the Kanarese, and the Wakatakas with the Andhras. Thus the Yadavas were the first kings of Maharashtra who belonged to the people and spoke their language. Marathi naturally came into prominence in the reign of the Yadavas. The earliest Marathi inscription is of 983. A statue of Gomateshvara was erected at Shravan Belgola in Mysore State by the king Chamundaraja of the Ganga dynasty. This fact is inscribed there in several languages and the words 'श्रीचामुंडराये करवियले' are in Marathi.

King Someshvara Chalukya wrote a Sanskrit work called "Manasollhasa" or "Abhilashitārtha Chintamani" in 1129. The book contains some Marathi verses also.

• "जेणे रसातल उणु मत्स्यरूपें वेद आणियलें  
मनुशिवक वाणियले तौ संसारसागर तारण  
मोहंतो रावो नारायणु जो गीची"

He who brought the Vedas from the ocean in the garb of a fish and praised Manu and Siva is the Mahatma King Narayan. He helps the crossing of the sea of life.

The next Marathi inscription is of the year 1157, and was found in a temple at Palasdeva on the bank of the river Bhima.

"श्री चंगदेव दंडनाके विष्णुगृहकेलें । ईश्वर संवच्छरी नीलजले । प्रासादी बस वणसव गा तेहाचे पुत्त भाउया । स्वम्भा निष्कृती सोनेथा साहसु एकु १००० प्रासादि अस करवातोत्तरे भूमी १०० दाउ पसाउबाहिरा । सकु १०७९ मंगल मइश्री ।"

'The temple was built by Changdeva and his sons at a cost of 1,000 gold coins in the year Saka 1079.' This inscription is important as it gives the year. The other important ancient Marathi inscriptions are as follows :—

1187—at Parel near Bombay—about a grant of land by King Aparaditya to a temple. It is in Sanskrit, but the last three lines are in Marathi. The Marathi lines are vulgar and indecent, and are specially written to warn the ignorant common people from disturbing the gift. "The mother of the man who will break this command will sleep with a donkey."

1206—at Patan in Khandesha. It is also in Sanskrit, but the last five lines are written in Marathi. It is about the grant of land and the custom duty on ghee to a Hindu monastery by Shri Soideva Nikumbha, a feudatory of the Yadava kings. The gift was made at the time of a lunar eclipse. The inscription also lays down the detailed procedure for the collection and distribution of the revenue accrued to the monastery.

The most important inscription however is that of Pandharpur, known as the inscription of 'Chauryanshi' (84). The various lines of the inscription are of different dates ranging between 1273 and 1277. The temple was repaired and partly rebuilt during this period, and the names of the several donors are given in this inscription. Gifts were made for this purpose by King Ramadeva Yadava and his premier Hemadri, and a number of other persons belonging to different castes contributed their quota for this work. Shripati Naik, Gangadhar Naik, Baba Senwi, Gourubhao of Vijapura, Narsayya Joshi, Maibai Damodhar Bhat, Malodeva, Hayavaha Ayya, Senda Sethe, Mehakar Naganna are some of the donors named in the inscription. They belong to Maharashtra, Karnakata and Telangana. The list contains the names of some women also. King Ramadeva personally visited Pandharpur in 1276 and gave the temple a substantial grant. But he does not seem to have belonged to the new Bhagwat cult. He was probably an orthodox Hindu, and was influenced by Hemadri. This shows that the temple

at Pandharpur was well known throughout Maharashtra and the bordering countries before this date. Ignorant pilgrims however rub their foreheads against this famous inscription thinking that thereby they would not be required to take births in the 84 lakhs of living species in the world after their death, and would attain Bramha straightway. This is the interpretation put by the common pilgrims on the word '84'.

The first great poet of Marathi is Mukundaraja. He was a Shaiva and probably a follower of the Natha-sampradaya. The names of Matsyendra, Goraksha and Gaininath are well known throughout India as great philosopher-saints. They preached and also practised Yogic philosophy. The common people attributed supernatural powers to them. Their followers are often known as 'Kan-phate' as they wear large ear-rings. King Gopichanda was probably their patron and also a follower of the sect. There are many songs about King Gopichanda and his queen-mother, Mainavati, current in the 'Kan-phate' Sect. The Bengalis claim these Natha saints as their own while the writings of Gorakshanatha (Goraksha-gita) are in Hindi. A hill in Satara district is however known as Matsyendragada, and a huge tamarind tree is named after Gorakshanatha. We may safely conclude that the Nath-sect might have originated in Northern India, but the nathas travelled and had disciples throughout the land. Their names are associated with various places of pilgrimage in Punjab, Nepal, Ceylon, Kathiawada and Bengal. Gorakshanatha probably revived Hinduism in Nepal, and drove away the Budhistic Mahayana sect from the land. Gorakshanatha and his preceptor Matsyendranatha are worshipped in Nepal even today, and probably the word 'Gurakhe' as applied to the Nepalese denominates them as the followers of Gorakshanatha.

Mukundaraja traces his spiritual descent as follows :—

ADYA GURUNATH



HARINATH



RAGHUNATH



MUKUNDARAJA

The line of his preceptors belonged probably to the Nath-sect. The Samadhi (memorial erected at the place of burial or cremation) of Mukundaraja is either at Ambe Jogai in the Nizam's territory or at the village of Khedle in Baitool district. Both these places claim him. The Samadhi of Harinath is at Ambhora in Bhandara district on the bank of the river Vainganga, and that of Raghunath is in Chhindwara district. It is, therefore, probable that Mukundaraja was a resident of the eastern districts of the Central Provinces. It seems from the following quotation from "Viveka Sindhu" that Harinath was also born at Ambhora where he died.

“आय श्री गुरुनाथ । तेथोनि श्री हरिनाथ  
तयाचा शिष्य श्री रघुनाथ । ज्ञानगुणसमुद्र ॥  
बाण गंगेचिया तीरी । मनोहर अंबा नगरी  
तेथ प्रगटला श्रीहरी । जगदीश्वर ॥”

“Viveka-Sindhu” is the principal work of Mukundaraja. A Brahmin by name Gopal Mudgal translated “Viveka-Sindhu” in Sanskrit. This fact is a clear indication of the greatness of the work and the influence which it exerted on contemporary learned scholars. Mukundaraja based his work on the philosophy of the Upanishadas and followed the Bhashya of Shankaracharya, in that work as seen from the following lines :—

‘तैसे उपनिषदांचें मंधन  
करोनि केला ग्रंथ निर्माण’  
\* \* \*

‘श्री शांकराक्षी बरी  
मी बोलिलो मराठी बैखरी  
म्हणुनि येथ धरावी चतुरी । शास्त्रबुद्धी ।’

The following lines from “Viveka-Sindhu” clearly show that ‘the work was written in 1188. Ballala or Bhillam, a descendant of the lion (Nru-sinha) among men (Sindhan or Seunchandra are merely corrupt forms of Sinha) and a master of many elephants (Sharang-dhar) was ruling at that time. His son Jayantapala (Jaitrapala) pressed the poet to write this work’. Mukundaraja was the preceptor of Jayantapala, the heir-apparent to the throne of the Yadavas in 1188. The name of the founder of the Yadava dynasty is given as Seunchandra or Sindhan in the copper-plate inscription. Hemadri however gives the name of

the founder as 'Sinharaja' in his 'Rajaprashasti'—historical sketch of the Yadava dynasty. The names Seunchandra, Sindhan and Sinharaja have thus an identical meaning 'a lion king'

“नृसिंहाचा बल्लाळ । तेयाचा कुमरु जयंतपाळ  
तेणेंकरविला हा रोळ । ग्रंथ-रचनेचा ॥  
शके अकरा शेदाहोत्तरू । साधारण संवत्सरू  
राजा शारंगधरू । राज्य करी ॥  
ऐसा समयो सर्वोत्तम । तेथ मुकुंद द्विजौत्तम  
विवेकसिंधु मनोरम । निर्मिता झाला ॥”

Jayantapala ascended the throne in 1192. The above lines were not properly interpreted by many scholars. They searched in vain for the names of three consecutive kings Narsinha, Ballala and Jayantapala among the genealogical tables of the several ruling dynasties in Deccan of that period. The mention of both Jayantapala and Sharangdhar was also felt to be an unsurmountable difficulty. But in the above lines it is nowhere mentioned that Ballal was a son of Nrusinha, nor is it mentioned that Jayantapala was a ruling king in Śake 1110 (1188 A.D.). The words Nrisinha and Sharangdhar are common nouns and are used as appropriate epithets of the great Yadava kings. Ballal was ruling at Deogiri in 1188 and Jayantapala who was the heir-apparent to the throne was a disciple of Mukundaraja. He pressed his preceptor to write that great work when he was a prince and not a king. The proper interpretation of the passage is given above. It agrees both with the known facts in history and also with the traditional biography of Mukundaraja. 'Pavan-Vijaya', 'Mul-stambha', 'Paramamrita' are some of the other works of Mukundaraja. The first two are in the form of dialogues between Shankara and Parvati. They are works on Yoga and Vedanta respectively.

The language of these different books written by Mukundaraja does not look very ancient, and some scholars doubt whether Mukundaraja lived in the 12th century. But the poet himself has given the date of the composition of 'Viveka-Sindhu' in the text itself and there is no reason to doubt its veracity. The language of the books must have been modernized as they were copied and recopied by various writers during the course of the following five hundred years. The art of printing as introduced



in India is of a very recent date, and books were circulated in old days through the agency of scribes and amanuenses who unintentionally often modernized while copying the language of the originals. No Eknath fixed the reading of Viveka-Sindhu after research as was done in the case of Dnyaneshvari.

The other ancient Marathi works known today are those written by the followers of the Mahanubhao sect. The Vedic Sanatani Hindus were opposed to these religious revolutionaries, and their literature was, therefore, mostly written in a secret code as they were afraid of religious persecution. There are several code-scripts used by the Mahanubhao sect, and consequently the ancient literature has been well preserved in its original form in Mahanubhao monasteries. The ancient form of the language too is preserved in those works as scribes had to copy the code-scripts verbatim, otherwise they became unintelligible. In the early days of the Mahanubhao sect the code-scripts were not probably used in writing the books, as Hindu opposition had not then gathered much strength. Some changes in the texts might have occurred in this period. The 'Leela-charitra' was written by a disciple of Chakradhara, and disciples are generally blind devotees of their master and believe in all sorts of miracles. The 'Sidhanta-sutra-path' was edited by Keshavarajasuri who was a disciple not directly of Chakradhara but of Nagdevacharya, Chakradhara's disciple, and distance of time leads often to distortion. The following are some of the important Mahanubhao works of the post-Mukundaraja date :—

- (i) 'Leela-charitra' by Mahindra was probably written about the year 1273. It must have been written soon after the death of Chakradhara which occurred about 1272.
- (ii) 'Shishupala-Vadha' and 'Ekadasha Skandha' by Bhaskar Kavishvara were written in 1274-75.
- (iii) 'Vatsa-harana' by Damodhar Pundit was written in 1278.
- (iv) 'Rukhmini Swayamvar' by Narendra Pundit was written in 1288.
- (v) 'Sidhanta-sutra-path' by Keshavaraja-suri was probably prepared in 1298. It is a collection of pithy sayings

in 'Leela-charitra'. The Mahanubhaos claim that the sayings as actually spoken by Chakradhara have been reproduced in this work.

- (vi & vii) 'Ridhipur-Varnan' by Maheshvara Pundit and 'Gita-tika' by Murarimalla or Yakshadeva were both written about the year 1302 A.D.
- (viii) The 'Dhawale' or Gita-songs were composed by Rupai or Mahadamba about this time.
- (ix) 'Dnyan-prabodha' by Vishvanatha Balapurkar was written in 1331.
- (x) 'Ridhipura-Varnan' by Narayan Pundit Vyas is of a later date and was written in 1363.

The first four works are definitely of the pre-Dnyaneshwara date, and the fifth work, though composed later, being based on 'Leela-charitra', is also of a pre-Dnyaneshwar date from the language standpoint, if not strictly in the chronological sense.

The Mahanubhao literature is solely religious and sectarian, but it affords ample scope for study to a student of Marathi language from the standpoint of both philology and grammar. It is a pity that the Mahanubhao literature was not in general circulation for 600 years and more, and its study was confined to the sect only. Had it been current the general trend of religious thought in Maharashtra would have been perceptibly affected.

## THE RISE OF VAISHNAVISM

THE Vaishnava cult came from the Tamil country in the south. The Tamil Aluvars or Vaishnava saints who lived between the third and the tenth centuries popularized this cult. The Vaishnavas were firm believers in the doctrine of Ahimsa. In fact, Vaishnavism may be described as Jainism tacked on to the old worship of Shrikrishna. Christianity is also often described as the combination of Buddhism with Judaism. Vaishnavism spread throughout India after 1000 A.D. But in Northern India it degenerated by the emphasis laid on the amorous acts of Shrikrishna and Gopis. The Radha cult or the Gopi-Vallabha cult was the natural outcome of the belief in the amours of Shrikrishna. These immoral deeds of Shrikrishna as described in Bhagwat were sometimes depicted as philosophical allegories wherein Shrikrishna was the soul and the Gopis represented human desires. Jayadeva who was a court-poet of King Lakshmana Sen of Bengal describes the amours of Krishna and Radha in most enchanting terms without this philosophical garb. Vaishnavism in the Dravidian country was however rigid and ascetic in tone. It emphasized the devotional aspect of religion. Knowledge, devotion and duty (service) are the three principal paths of self-realization as described in Bhagawat-gita, though they are interdependent and cannot exist by themselves. Shankaracharya emphasized the aspect of knowledge while the Vaishnavas laid stress on the devotional aspect of religion. Vaishnavism however assumed a very obstinate and orthodox character in the Dravidian country, and bitter quarrels often arose there between the Shaivas and Vaishnavas which generally terminated in religious persecution of one another and sometimes even in the destruction of temples of the opposite sect. For example, it is on record that King Adhirajendra who was nicknamed as 'Krimikantha' by the Vaishnavas in detestation, destroyed the temple of Vishnoo on the Chidambaram hill (*I.A.*, 1912).

The Vaishnavism in Maharashtra is known as Bhagwata-dharma. It is purely devotional and catholic in its nature. It has no inclination towards the worship of the amours of Shrikrishna and the Gopis including Radha. It has similarly no contempt for Shaivism. It is in fact an attempt to combine two antagonistic religious sects—Shaivism and Vaishnavism—into a Bhagwata Sampradaya. Vijayasena, King of Bengal, belonged to a line of Kshatriyas who migrated to the north from the south. Curiously enough, he thought of combining these two enemical sects, and the idol of Pradyumneshvara in the temple built by him was composed of both Siva and Vishnoo joined together (*E.I.*, page 307). Similarly the image of Vishnoo in the temple at Pandharpur is supposed to have a Sivalinga on the head. This is alluded to by all saints from Nivruttinatha to Ramadasa.

“पुंडलिकाचें भाग्य । वर्णावया अमरी  
नाहीं चराचरी । ऐसा कोणी ॥  
विष्णुसहित शिब । आणिला पंढरी  
देव भीमातीरी । मेरवणें जेणें ॥”.....निवृत्तीनाथ  
\* \* \*

“भग यावरीही पार्था । माझ्या भजनीं आस्था  
तरी तयाते मी माथा । मुकुट करी ॥  
उत्तमासि मस्तक । खालविजे हें काय कौतुक  
परी मान करिती तीन्हीलोक । पायबाणियां ॥  
तरी श्रद्धावस्तूसि आदरू । करितां जाणिजे प्रकारू  
जरी होय श्रीगुरु । सदाशिव ॥  
परी हें असो आतां । महेशातें वानितां  
आत्मस्तुती होतां । संचार असे ॥  
यथालागीं हें नोहे । म्हणितलें रमानोहें  
अर्जुना मी वाहे । शिरी तयाते ॥”.....ज्ञानेश्वर  
\* \* \*

“विठोनें शिरी बाहिला देवराणा”.....रामदास

Panduranga itself is a name of Siva according to the grammarian Hemachandra, and there is a temple of Siva at Pandharpur which pilgrims first visit before going to the temple of Vithoba. No authentic knowledge is available about Pundalika the first devotee of Vithoba to whom the temple owes its existence. According to legends, Pundalika was the only son of Janudeva and Satyavati who lived in Dindirvana in Southern India. After

marriage Pundalika began to ill-treat his parents who consequently joined a party of pilgrims bound for Benares. But Pundalika and his young wife who were enraged at the escape of the old couple from their clutches followed them on horse-back. The young couple rode merrily while the old parents walked all the way. Every evening Pundalik forced the tired and worn-out parents to groom the horses, to cook, and do other menial works and thus made their life very miserable. On their way to Benares, the party halted at the hermitage of Kukkutswamy. Pundalika accidentally lying awake in his bed at night saw a number of beautiful women clad in dirty garments entering the hermitage of the sage. They washed the clothes, brought water and cleaned the floor and did other menial service to the sage. Their clothes became lovelier by the service thus rendered and then they vanished at dawn. Next day he saw the same scene repeated. He thereupon threw himself at the feet of the lovely damsels and asked them the explanation of the miracle. They replied that they were the sacred rivers of India and their garments were soiled by the sins of the pilgrims who bathed in them and they purified themselves by serving Kukkutswamy who was an ideal and devoted son all his life. Pundalika was a changed man from that day. He turned out a devoted and obedient son, returned home to Pandharpur and served his parents to the best of his abilities. When God Shrikrishna visited him, he was massaging the feet of his old parents. His devotion to duty was so great that he threw a brick (बीट) towards God to stand upon and rest till his self-imposed task of serving his parents was completed. The temple of Vithoba was later on built at that place by Pundalika. Probably the name 'Vithoba' means 'one standing on a brick' (बिटेवरी उभा). The river Bhimarathi so well known to pilgrims going to Pandharpur is however mentioned in an inscription of 1249. In another stone-inscription in Pandharpur of 1270 Bhanu, a son of Keshava, is referred to as having performed an 'Aptoryama'-sacrifice which gratified hundreds of people, and Vithal and other gods also. This shows that the temple at Pandharpur was famous long before this date. The form 'Pandharige' occurring in an inscription of 1237 is also Kanarese. 'King Somesvara conquered the territory and

encamped on the bank of the Bhimarathi, and the sage Pundalika was lovingly remembered by the people there'. The Samadhi of Pundalika is at Pandharpur in the form of a Siva temple thus establishing the identity of Siva and Vishnool by one of the earliest and greatest of the Vaishnavas. The famous Arati (devotional song) 'युगे अट्ठावीस विटेवरी उभा . . . ' was composed by Namadeva as mentioned in the end of the Arati itself. Namadeva therein says that 28 yugas have elapsed since the arrival of God at Pandharpur for seeing Pundalika. If Namadeva meant an infinite period of time by the expression '28 yugas', why did he use the small figure 28? The words Shata (100) or Sahasra (1,000) or Laksha (1,00,000) after the word 'yuga' would have better expressed the infinity of time. The figure 28 therefore seems to have been definitely used with a purpose. The word Yuga commonly meant in old times a period of 4 years only as stated in the book 'Gavamayanam' by Pundit Rudrapattan Shyamshastry. According to Vedanga-jyotisha the yuga denoted a period of five years or 62 lunar months. The term 'yuga' was thus very definite though the Treta-yuga, Dwapara-yuga, Kali-yuga and Satya-yuga, as mentioned in Puranas, connoted comparatively infinite lapses of time. It seems therefore probable that Namadeva used the word 'yuga' in his 'Arati' in the definitely limited sense, *i.e.*, a period of 4 or 5 years as commonly understood by the people and the date of Pundalika and the erection of the temple of Vitthal was therefore  $28 \times 4 = 112$  or  $28 \times 5 = 140$  years before his time. Dnyaneshvara visited Pandharpur in the year 1293 with his brothers and sister, and there became acquainted with Namadeva who was already famous then as a great devotee of Vitthal. The 'Arati' must have been composed by him about that time. Thus, the date of Pundalika would be approximately 1181 or 1153. The beginning of Vitthal-bhakti in Maharashtra thus originates from 1150 approximately. As the temple seems to have needed general repairs in the year 1273, one may safely assume that it was at least of 100 to 125 years standing at that time, and the date of Pundalika can safely be taken about the year 1150. From the inscription we learn that Pundalika was lovingly remembered by the people in 1237. This also points that he died only a few years before that date.

The word Vithoba or Vithoo or Vitthal is a corrupt Kanarese pronunciation of Vishnoo. Bittideva is a familiar Kanarese name of Vishnoo. The Prakrit form of Vishnoo in Bengali and Ooriya also is Vishthu, which corresponds to Vithu.

The Jains claim that the image of Vithoba was originally the image of 'Jina', and it must be admitted that the image is fashioned after Budhistic and Jain idols. The image of Vithoba is standing on a small brick with the hands resting against the hips. The image is short-statured and represents peace and inaction. It is an incarnation of Budhistic stagnation and inactivity. It is an emblem of passivity and rest, and peace and contentment and one feels inclined to believe that it was a genuine attempt to placate Jainism which had a considerable following in the southern Maratha country or Kuntala, and had a great hold on the people. It is possible that a large number of Jains were brought back into the Hindu fold due to the incarnation of Vishnoo as Vitthal in Pandharpur.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that any devotee of God can enter with impunity the innermost sacred recess, and actually touch the image with his own hands and lay his head physically and not metaphorically or figuratively on the feet of the idol, and no priest has the power of barring his entrance to the sacred precinct. The Bhagwat-dharma thus followed the teachings of Chakradhara to a limited extent only as far as the abolition of caste was concerned. Like the Mahanubhao sect people of all castes were admitted into the mysticism of Bhagwat-dharma and treated on a footing of equality. Absolution through devotion was open to all males and females and Brahmins and non-Brahmins. It was certainly a great advance over the religious doctrines of Shankaracharya which restricted Sanyas to Brahmin males only. The Bhagwat-dharma however did not renounce the caste-system, and thus enjoyed great popularity with the Hindus. It was a mild compromise between the Mahanubhao doctrines and the Chaturvarnya of Sanatani Hindus. The Bhagwat-dharma did not take any notice of the castes of the devotees in the presence of God. All devotees were considered to be the beloved children of God. But the Bhagwat-dharma did not at all interfere with the prevalent caste-system outside

the gates of the temple. The saints and preachers of Bhagwat-dharma in Maharashtra were mild and cautious reformers who wanted to march ahead with the people without hurting their religious sentiments in any way. The Mahanubhao saints were, on the other hand, revolutionary reformers, and in their ardent zeal of reform they marched far ahead of the common people and were themselves thus outcasted, as their lead was not followed. Revolution undoubtedly has life and vitality, and it has the power of transforming dull and dumb society into a new mould, while the process of evolution is often slow and tiresome and society thereby advances at a snail's pace only. But revolution is at times as dangerous as a powerful electric spark, and if perchance the experiment fails, the social order of things is destroyed beyond recognition and redemption. The Bhagwat-dharma slow and steady like the tortoise won the race in Maharashtra, while the Mahanubhao sect which was of the same date lost and lagged behind like the fast-footed and active hare in Aesop's fables. The Bhagwat-dharma spread rapidly through Maharashtra, and thousands of people of all castes and creeds became its adherents. A feeling of national brotherhood based on this devotional aspect of religion pervaded the land in spite of the prevalent obnoxious caste-system. Maharashtra was their common mother-land, Vithoba was their common God, Marathi was their common mother-language, and the several Maharashtra saints were their common religious leaders and spokesmen. This religious bond in course of time developed the idea of national unity.



## DNYANESHVARA AND HIS SPIRITUAL FRIENDS

DNYANESHVARA was undoubtedly the founder of Bhagwat-dharma in Maharashtra. He was the second child of his parents, and was born in 1275. His elder brother Nivrattinath was born in 1273. Sopan born in 1277 was his younger brother, and Muktabai born in 1279 was their only sister. The story of the birth of these four children is very romantic. Their father Vitthalpant inherited from his ancestors the Kulkarniship of Apegaon, a village situated on the northern bank of the river Godavari and a few miles away from Paithan. He was married to Rukhminibai the daughter of Siddhopant, Kulkarni of Alandi. Vitthalpant was a religious-minded man, and the death of his father Govindapant affected him much. He lived with his father-in-law for a short period after the death of his father, and then left his home for pilgrimage. He went to Benares, and became a disciple of Ramananda, and was there initiated as a Sanyasi by his preceptor. Swami Ramananda was once travelling from place to place on a spiritual pilgrimage, and in the course of his travels he visited Alandi. He heard the pathetic story of Rukhminibai who was pining away for her husband, and was much moved with the heart-felt supplications of Siddhopant and his daughter when he learnt that his disciple was the run-away ascetic husband of the woman. He blessed Rukhminibai, and told her that she would soon have children. Accordingly, when he returned to Benares he sent back Vitthalpant to Alandi with remonstrations and expostulations, and told him that no one had a right of becoming a Sanyasi unless he had done his worldly duty and left children behind him to continue the line. Vitthalpant had perforce to return to Alandi, and the Sanyasi had four children in succession from his devoted and loving wife as the poet Namadeva aptly describes चैतन्याश्रमवासी । जाहले गृहवासी. This romantic story explains the mystical names of the four children. The family was very much persecuted by the orthodox Brahmins who refused to perform the thread-ceremony (मुंज) of the brothers.

The family migrated to Nasik, but the 'appellation', children of a Sanyasi, followed them. Both the parents soon passed away perhaps by drowning themselves in the sacred river Godavari, and the young children were left all-alone to face the social persecution. It was at Nasik that Nivruttinatha was initiated in a cave at Bramhagiri near Nasik by Gaininatha of the Matsyendra-nath sect. The story runs that Nivrutti was separated from his family members while a tiger once pursued them on the Bramhagiri hill which they used to visit every day, and that in mortal fear he took refuge in that cave. But the saint Gaininatha was living there. Gaininatha was probably a disciple of the Natha-sect stationed in Maharashtra. Nivruttinatha in his turn initiated Dnyaneshvara after the death of his parents. The social persecution of the children however remained unabated, and they went to Paithan which was famous as a great seat of learning, for obtaining a certificate of purification. It seems that the Brahmins at Paithan were greatly impressed by the keen intelligence and the spiritual learning of these four children, and gave them the required certificate in 1287. It is not known whether Hemadri the premier of Maharashtra had any hand in the matter. Dnyaneshvara along with his brothers and sister then went to Nevase, where he saved Sacchidananda Baba from a dangerous illness by his spiritual power. Sacchidananda Baba was thereupon filled with a deep sense of gratitude, and willingly became the disciple of the boy-saint and consented to write 'Dnyaneshvari' while Dnyaneshvara was giving the discourse. A pillar in the temple of the goddess at Nevase is still shown as the place where Dnyaneshvara expounded his learned discourse on Bhagwatgita in presence of his preceptor Nivruttinatha and a gathering of devout men and women who assembled there every evening to listen to the learned exposition (निरूपण). The work was begun in 1287, and completed in 1290 which is accepted as the date of the composition of 'Dnyaneshvari'. The other works of Dnyandeve are the 'Amritanubhava', the 'Abhangas' and the 'Changdeva-pasashti'. But 'Dnyaneshvari' is the greatest of them all. The treatment of the various philosophical problems is lucid, penetrating and full of spiritual fervour. Dnyaneshvara has simplified further the abstruse philosophical

problems by giving analogies at every step from the vast store of experience which he seemed evidently to have possessed. The Ovi and the Abhanga metres which Dnyaneshvara used so successfully are original Marathi metres, and not borrowed from Sanskrit. The Ovi of Dnyaneshvara is incomparable in its grace and exquisite in its power of expression, and it also reveals a mysterious capacity of manifold evolution. 'Dnyaneshvari' is an exposition of Bhagwatgita, and is evidently written on the lines of Shankaracharya (आचार्यालें वाट पुसत) but it reads like a beautiful original work on the philosophy of religion, and Dnyaneshvara rises to transcendental heights hardly reached by Shankaracharya. We cannot do better than quote Prof. W. B. Patvardhan about its literary value :—

“The Dnyaneshvari is from the literary side so exquisite, so beautiful, so highly poetic in its metaphors and comparisons, similes and analogical illustrations, so perspicuous and lucid in style, so rich in fantasy, so delightful in its imagery, so lofty in its flights, so sublime in tone, so melodious in word-music, so original in its concepts, and so pure in taste that notwithstanding the profundity, the recondite nature of the subject and the inevitable limitations attendant upon the circumstance that the author's main object was to make the original intelligible rather than add anything new, the reader is simply fascinated, floats rapturously on the crest of the current and is lost in the cadence of the rhythm and the sweet insinuating harmonies.”

Nivrittinatha and Dnyaneshvara along with Sopandeva and Muktabai visited Pandharpur about the year 1293. This pilgrimage filled Dnyaneshvara with an enthusiasm for the Bhagwad-dharma as followed by the saints of Pandharpur headed by Namadeva who was a great democratic mystic of the age. Dnyaneshvara, in fact, became the first apostle of the sect as all the saints in Pandharpur were impressed by his learning, his austere asceticism, his supernatural devotion to the religious cause, his oratorical power of exposition, his pure and transcendent personality, his broad vision and his gigantic intellect, and they unanimously acclaimed him though very young in years as their spiritual preceptor and prophet. The band of

saints which included prominently the three brothers and their sister Muktabai, Namadeva the tailor, Visoba Khechar, Samvata the gardener, Narhari the goldsmith, Gora the potter and Chokhamela the mahar and Jani the sudra maidservant of Namadeva went out on an extensive pilgrimage throughout India. Changa-deva who was an old yogi for a long time, found yoga ultimately barren of real spiritual life, and became a disciple of Dnyaneshvara. The 'Changadeva-pasashti' is the advice given by Dnyaneshvara to this arrogant yogi who afterwards became his most ardent and humble disciple. He also accompanied the party. They preached the greatness of devotion in their journey by their own saintly lives and by Vedantic expositions, Pauranika discourses, Bhajanas (congregational prayers) and Kirtanas in praise of the Almighty. The gospel of Bhagwat-dharma was enunciated, and its devotional aspect was emphasized throughout the country. They left Pandharpur by the Karhad road and visited Delhi, Mathura, Ayodhya, Allahabad and Benares which were in the hands of the Mahomedans. The saints returned to Maharashtra after a lapse of three years. The great Yadava king was defeated by Alauddin, and had become a vassal of the Delhi Sultan in this interval. The future of Maharashtra and Hinduism looked gloomy as the saints had personally witnessed the devastations wrought by the victorious Mahomedans at the various centres of Hindu pilgrimage in the north and the general massacres and acts of rapine and forcible conversions which followed the Islamic conquests. The saints visited Alandi which was also a centre of Vitthal-bhakti like Pandharpur for at least a hundred years before the birth of Dnyaneshvara. There is an inscription of 1209 in the monastery of Hariharendra Swami and the images of both Vitthala and Rukhmini are carved on a stone-slab just near the inscription. At Alandi, Dnyaneshvara manifested to his friend Namadeva his desire of passing away from the world, as he felt that he had fulfilled his mission in life. On the eleventh day of the bright half of the month of Kartika in the year 1296 (Śaka 1218) the saints fasted, and remained awake the whole night performing Bhajan and Kirtan. Dnyaneshvara entered the mood of spiritual sublimity, and passed away from the world on the thirteenth day of the month. Dnyaneshvara took Samadhi in

front of the Siva temple of Sidheshvara at Alandi. The incident is graphically and very touchingly narrated by the great saint poet Namadeva who was present on the occasion, in his Abhangas. All the saints then left Alandi, and went on pilgrimage and within a year after Dnyaneshvara's death, Sopandeva passed away at Sasavad, Muktabai at Edlabada and Nivruttinatha at Tryambakeshvara, as all three of them refused to take their meals after the death of Dnyaneshvara. The graphic description given by Namadeva about these great brothers, and their sister and their life-history stands unparalleled in its sublimity and pathos and simplicity of style and diction. It is a glorifying account written by a truthful contemporary saint. Changadeva says—

“मोतियाचें पाणी । रांजिण भरिला  
पोट भरुनी प्याला । ज्ञानदेव ॥  
अभ्राची साउली । धरोनिया हातीं  
शेलासे एकांती । निवृत्तिदेव ॥  
पुष्पांचा परिमळ । वेगळा काढिला ॥  
तो हार लेइला । सोपानदेव  
हिऱ्याच्या धुगऱ्या जेवण जेवली  
पोट भरुनी घाली । मुक्ताबाई ॥”

Dnyaneshvara drank to his fill the water of pearls. Nivruttinatha entered solitude with the shade of the pure white clouds in his hands. Sopandeva decorated himself with a garland of fragrance separated from the flowers. Muktabai was satisfied by having a meal of cooked diamonds.

It is true that there is no mention of Vitthal in 'Dnyaneshvari' but there are many references to Krishna and Vishnoo and to the devotees of Panduranga. All the three words meant one and the same God.

‘कृष्ण विष्णु हरि गोविंद । या नामाचे निखिल प्रबंध’—अध्याय ९-२१०

—‘Dnyaneshvari’, IX. 210.

The word ‘Sant’ (saint) peculiar to the Bhakti school is however often referred to by Dnyaneshvara. So also the word ‘Kirtan’ which was the popular device of spreading Bhagwat-dharma among the masses is unmistakably referred to in ‘Dnyaneshvari’ which was naturally

‘आत्मज्ञानें चोखडी । संत हे माझीं रूपडी ।’

‘कीर्तिनाचेनि नट नाचे । नाशिलें व्यवसाय प्रायश्चित्ताचें ।’

looked upon as the Adya-Veda of Bhagwat-dharma. The spiritual friends of Dnyaneshvara soon followed him. Changadeva died in 1305, Visoba Khechar in 1309 and Narhari Sonar in 1313. Gora Kumbhar and Samvata Mali died just before the date of the Samadhi of Dnyaneshvara. Chokhamela Mahar was a resident of Mangalvedha, near Sangli, and lived to a pretty old age, and died in 1338. He spread the cult of this new Vaishnavism (भागवत धर्म) among the depressed classes, and kept them united and contented in the Hindu fold by preaching the devotional gospel of Bhagwat-dharma and promising them the highest form of spiritual absolution by devotion and prayer alone, in spite of the teachings of orthodox Hinduism to the contrary. Chokhamela's noble life and his spiritual teachings were mainly responsible in keeping the depressed classes in the fold of Hinduism during the following 300 years of Mahomedan rule in Maharashtra. He was persecuted by the masses though the saints treated him on a footing of equality, and considered him as one of themselves. The Brahmin priests did not allow him to enter the temple of Vitthal, but the God himself as the legend tells us, took him in the inmost recess of the temple, and lovingly, embraced him. Janabai who was his contemporary aptly praises his devotion.—

“चोखामेळा अनामिका । भक्तराज तोचि एक ।  
 परब्रह्म ल्याचें घरी । न सांगतां काम करी ।  
 चोखामेळा संत भला । तेणें देव भुलविला ।  
 चोखामेळयासाठी । ढोरें ओढी जगजेठी ।”

The God Vithoba used to help Chokhamela in his menial work. Chokhamela died by being buried alive under a parapet wall which suddenly collapsed and fell on him while he was working there as a labourer. Several other workmen were also buried there along with him. Namadeva collected his bones from the heaps, and separated them from those of others as even the bones of Chokhamela were found to be mildly pronouncing the name of Vitthal. Namadeva took his bones to Pandharpur, and erected a Samadhi on them just in front of the main gate of the temple. The story shows that Chokhamela's devotion of Vitthal was so deep and penetrating that after his death even his lifeless crumbling bones carried the message of Bhagwat-dharma to the crores of untouchables in the land.

Namadeva was born in 1270, and was five years older than Dnyaneshvara. His father was a tailor by caste, and lived at Narsingapur. He led a very lawless life in the early part of his career, but later on he repented, and became an ardent devotee of Vitthal. He accompanied Dnyaneshvara on pilgrimage, and is described to have worked out various miracles in his long life. The bringing of a dead cow to life is one of his famous miracles. Dnyaneshvara and Namadeva were very great friends, and represented respectively the intellectual and emotional sides of a spiritual life. Visoba Khechar was the spiritual teacher of Namadeva who convinced him of the Omnipresence of God, and initiated him in the democratic spiritual mysticism of the age. Visoba Khechar himself was a disciple of either Sopanadeva or Dnyaneshvara. This shows that the three brothers, though very young in age, had reached a great height of spiritual mysticism, and were respected and worshipped by far older and experienced religious men of the day. Namadeva lived to a very old age and died in 1350, *i.e.*, 54 years after the death of Dnyaneshvara. He was buried according to his own desire just below the footsteps at the main entrance of the temple of Vitthal as he wished that the particles of earth shedded from the feet of the devotees of Shri Vitthal should constantly fall on his mortal remains and bless him for all times to come.

Namadeva popularized the Bhagwat-dharma in Maharashtra by wandering on pilgrimage from place to place and giving public demonstrations of Bhajans and Kirtans which the masses eagerly and devoutly attended. He wrote thousands of religious verses in the Abhanga metre. His poetry is partly emotional and personal and partly mystical and spiritual. Some of his Abhangas narrate the stories from the Sanskrit classical epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharat and also from Bhagwat. His poems became very popular as they were written in a simple language and in a metre which could easily be set to fine music and had an earnestness of appeal about them. Namadeva had many disciples in Maharashtra. But while he and his disciples were worshipping Vitthal and praying to him in ecstasy, the Mahomedans conquered not only the whole of Maharashtra, but almost the whole of Deccan and the Hindu kings were beheaded

by them. It was only 16 years after the death of Dnyaneshvara that Maharashtra lost its independence, and the Yadao king Shankaradeva was beheaded. Harapaladeva was flayed alive and then beheaded in 1318. The Poyasalas of Dwarasamudra also completely lost their independence, and the Wakataka kings of Warangala were also conquered in 1323. The whole of Maharashtra with the surrounding Kanarese and Andhra countries was hereafter ruled for 300 years by the Mahomedan kings. All these great political changes took place in the life-time of Namadeva. The devotees of Panduranga were defeated everywhere and enslaved. They had to rejoice and be satisfied with their slavery on the strength of their spiritual glory and ardent devotion. The teachings of the great saints however kept them attached to the Hindu religion though conversion to Mahomedanism was very tempting from the worldly point of view. The wealth and the grandeur of the Mahomedan kings and the luxurious life of their noblemen and adherents did not consequently attract the Hindus in Maharashtra in large numbers. They remained poor, but they were contented. They were enslaved, but they remained staunch Hindus. The percentage of Mahomedan population in the south is very meagre and certainly negligible when compared with that of the north, and affords a standing testimony to the noble work of the saints of the Bhakti school of thought among the masses in Maharashtra.

Namadeva travelled extensively in Northern India too, and met his contemporary religious reformers in other parts of India. The great saint Narsi Mehta of Junagada in Kathiawada lived about the year 1335 according to the authoritative opinion of Mr. Iccharama Desai who has ably edited the poems of the great Guzerathi saint. Narsi Mehta relates some well-known incidents in the life of Namadeva. For example, the following verse

“। पूर्वे पंडरपूरमोझार ।

ब्राह्मणे आणी मर्तक नाय । लह बांधी सुलतान सभाय ॥

नामदेव गाय सजीवन करे । तो तुलसीमाला कंठे धरे ॥

ते नामदेवनी जिवाडी गाय । एवा समरथ वैकुंठराय ॥”

tells the story of Namadeva having brought to life again the dead cow of a Brahmin at the instance of the Sultan who wanted to test his mystic powers. The powerful king of



Vaikuntha who wears garlands of Tulsi enabled Namadeva to give life to the dead cow at Pandharpur. The story is told in Marathi in details by Mahipati in his biography of Namadeva comprised in 'Bhakta-Vijaya'. Namadeva was also supposed to be a contemporary of Guru Nanaka the great founder of the Sikh religion. Namadeva in the course of his pilgrimage is said to have spent several years with Guru Nanaka in the Punjab, and wrote a number of Hindi songs which bear an unmistakable stamp of Marathi, the mother-tongue of the poet. Namadeva founded a monastery at Bhavalpur, where one of his disciples Keshava resided in charge of the monastery. About 60 Hindi verses composed by Namadeva are incorporated in 'Grantha-saheba'—the great religious work of the Sikhs. The following words and phrases from the songs referred to above in the 'Granthasaheba'—

‘भ्रमि भ्रमि आये तुमचे द्वारा, नामदेव हरिगुन गाये, तुमचे पारस  
हमचे लोहा, ऐसा राजा श्री नरहरी, देवताचि आणि, गाडि चालती बुढिहि  
हाकती, यांचे धरी, पांच कोस, लाहुली, धोबी’—  
have a distinct Marathi stamp.

“छपिके घर जनम दैला । गुरु उपदेश भैला ॥

संतह कै परसाद नामा हरि भेटुला ॥”

The verse would be translated as follows :—“Namadeva born in the house of a tailor, was initiated by his preceptor, and realized Hari (God) by the favour of the saints.”

‘इमै बीठल ऊमै बीठल बीठल बिन संसार नही ।’

‘आज नामे बीठल देखिया मूरखको समजाऊ रे ।’

‘नामेको खामी बीठलु ऐसा ।’

The above lines clearly refer to Vitthal, the deity of Namadeva who is hither and thither and everywhere, and without whom life is empty. There are many references to the Pauranika stories of Dhruva, Pralhad, Putana, Ahilya, Draupadi in the Hindi songs of Namadeva as is also the case with his Marathi Abhangas. There are also references in the Hindi poems to Ekadashi fast and Harikirtan such as—

‘एकादशी व्रत रहै काहेको तीरथ जाई’, ‘तौ न पुजहि हरि कीरतनामा’ ।

Rama, Krishna, Hari, Vitthal are praised in the Hindi songs too. The following Hindi song in 'Granthasaheba' relates the story

of the miracle of giving life to a dead cow performed by Namadeva :—

सुलतान पूछे सुन बे नामा । देखो राम तुमारे कामा ॥  
 'बिसमिल गऊ देहु जीवाइ । ना तर गर्दन मारो ठाई' ॥  
 मेरा कीया कछु न होइ । करि है राम होइ है सोइ ॥  
 पावहु बेडी हाथहु ताल । नामा गावै गुन गोपाल ॥  
 गंगाजमण जौ उलटी बहै । तौ नामा हरि करतार है ॥  
 पाखतण बाज बजाइला । गरुड चढे गोबिंद आइला ॥  
 अपने भगतपर कीं प्रतिपाल । गरुड चढे आये गोपाल ॥  
 नाभा प्रणवै सेलमसेली । गऊ दुहाई बछरा मेलि ॥  
 दूधहि दुहिजब मटुकी भरी । ले बादशहाके आगि धरी ॥  
 नामदेव सभ रह्या सभाई । मिलि हिंदु सभ नामे पहिजाई ॥  
 जौ अबकी वार न जीवै गाइ । तो नामदेवका पतिया जाइ ॥  
 नामेकी कीर्ति रही संसारी । भगत जन ले उधन्या परि ॥  
 सगल कलेश निंदक भया खेदु । नामे नाराइन नही भेदु ॥

The song is quoted *in extenso* to prove the familiarity with which Namadeva was treated by the Sikh religion and its founder. Namadeva is rightly considered the greatest saint of Bhagwat-dharma as he popularized this new sect not only throughout Maharashtra but also interchanged his religious experience with other religious reformers in India, and thus helped in maintaining the spiritual unity of Hinduism in India in the 14th century when it was seriously threatened by the inroads of Islam.

Guru Nanak, however, preached his religion in the 15th and not in the 14th century. It, therefore, seems that some disciple of Namadeva in the Bhavalpur monastery must have been impressed by the tenets of the Sikh religion as preached by Guru Nanak and presented some of the songs of the founder of the monastery either to the disciples of Guru Nanak or to the Guru himself. Probably, the head of the Bhavalpur monastery at this period was also named Namadeva (the second). The disciples of a religious order pride in calling themselves after the founder of that sect. Scholars think that Namadeva who was the contemporary of Dnyaneshvara wrote mystical and spiritual poetry, while the mythological poems were written by Namadeva II who was a contemporary of Guru Nanak. There seems to be a difference of about 100 years between these two Namadevas and as the language perceptibly changed during this long interval,

the poems of one can be easily separated from those of the other even on linguistic considerations. Namadeva II probably became a disciple of Guru Nanak and embraced the Sikh faith and thus acted as the agent for carrying the gospel of Bhagwat-dharma to the land of the five rivers. It was duly incorporated in the 'Granthasaheba'—the sacred gita of the Sikh religion. The Hindus naturally regard Sikh religion as a special sect of Hinduism and are justly proud of its founder and the nine great disciples who followed him. The incorporation of the Abhangas of Namadeva in 'Granthasaheba', nearly a hundred years after his death, clearly proves that the spiritual unity of Hinduism in India is not at all affected by linguistic or parochial barriers.

## XVII

### THE BAHMANI KINGS

THE Mahomedan emperors of Delhi hardly ruled over the Deccan for 30 years. The Yadavas of Deogiri were exterminated in 1318 and Hasan Gango Bahmani who was appointed as Governor of the Deccan by the Delhi emperor, revolted successfully in 1347, threw away the yoke of suzerainty of the Delhi emperor, and proclaimed himself as an independent king of the Deccan. He removed his capital from Deogiri to Gulbarga which was a more central place for his vast domains which then extended from the Nerbuda to the Tungabhadra river in the south, and comprised the area from Choul in the west to Bedar in the east. Ahmad Shaha Wali, the seventh Bahmani Sultan, unwisely transferred his capital from Gulbarga to Bedar in 1426. He built a fort on a rock nearby, and named his capital as Ahmedabad Bedar, after his name. Hasan was employed in his early years by a Brahmin named Gangadhar who predicted on the strength of his astrological knowledge a glorious career for his promising young servant, and helped him in all possible ways to realize his ambitions. Hasan employed his old master as his revenue and finance minister on ascending the throne, and called himself Hasan Gango Bahmani out of gratitude to him. Hasan was not only an able general, but he was a courageous statesman and ruled over Maharashtra with great prudence and skill. He did not live long, however, to enjoy the fruits of his labours. He died in 1358, but his heirs and successors ruled over the Deccan as Bahmani kings till 1490 when the kingdom was practically disrupted, and gave rise to five independent Mahomedan principalities in the south, though the Bahmani nomenclature of one of them lingered for some more time.

The spirit of Independence, so prominently seen in the Deccan, was shared by these new Mahomedan kings also. The Bahmani kings, though Mahomedans by religion, often waged wars against the Muslim Sultans of Delhi and other Muslim rulers in India, the war-cry often being "North *versus* South". There were two principal parties in the kings' courts, some

noblemen belonging to the Northern and others belonging to the southern party. The difference of view-points between the Shia and the Sunni sects amongst the followers of Islam often accentuated these party-quarrels. The Hindu subjects naturally had sympathies with the southern party or the party of Deccani Muslims. The Bahmani kings zealously guarded the independence of the Deccan from the inroads of the northerners who were more hardy and war-like on account of their unbroken and unhampered connections with Afghanistan and other hilly countries beyond the borders of India and had ample resources both in men and money at their command. The Delhi emperors and Sultans recruited hardy and strong men from the border-land for their army. But even the sympathetic rule of the Bahmani kings could not meet impartial justice to their Hindu subjects. Positions of power and trust were generally occupied by the Mahomedans. The poor people in the land were often tempted to change from Hinduism to the Muslim fold for bread or other petty gains. Conversion often entitled a Hindu offender to an immediate pardon and consequent relief. Proselytization elevated him from abject slavery and misery to the rank of kinsmanship with the rulers in the land. Hindu feudatory kings in the realm were mortally afraid of these powerful rulers in their midst, and they were allowed to preserve a semblance of power merely on sufferance. They acknowledged the Bahmani kings as their overlords, and ungrudgingly paid them annual tributes in cash and kind as their loyal vassals. The slightest pretension to independence by any one of them was not only curbed but ruthlessly crushed. Vinayak Deva, King of Warangal, had to pay the penalty of being defeated, captured and cruelly put to death first by having his tongue cut out and then by being shot from a catapult into a vast bonfire where he was burnt to death in 1360. His son, Krishnadeva, purchased peace by ceding the fort of Goalkonda and paying a ransom of thirty-three lakhs of rupees with a large number of elephants and horses thrown in as an additional weight in the bargain. He had also to present a beautiful throne known as the 'Takhti Firoz' and then valued at four crores of rupees to his suzerain. Sometimes, a Hindu prince was compelled to give his beautiful young daughter in

marriage to his Muslim overlord or his young heir-apparent, the only other alternative to choose being the loss of his principality, power and perhaps life. A Hindu has generally a great fascination for his ancestral residence which he tries to protect at all risks, sometimes even at the cost of his honour, blasphemous though it may seem. He considers no sacrifice as too great when the question of preserving the ancestral home confronts him. Narsinha Roy had to give his daughter in marriage to Ferozshaha in 1399 and preserve his State. The Bahmani kings were courageous and ruled wisely. Many of them, however, drank heavily and kept large harems where pretty women from different parts of the country and representing different castes, tribes and faiths found a permanent asylum. A woman who once entered the harem with her consent or even without it was buried there till her death and permanently lost to the outside world. Her connections with her relatives ceased to exist from the day of her entry to the king's harem. Her life was a life of apparent luxury with a permanent Damocles' sword of the emperor's wrath and disfavour hanging by a hair over her crowned head. She was often engulfed in palace intrigues, either herself plotting against her more successful and for the time being more favourite rivals, or being plotted against by her comparatively unhappy and discarded sisters-in-love. It will be quite unfair to judge the Bahmani kings from the standpoint of the ethical and political code of morals of the 20th century. Both Hindu and Muslim kings then considered it to be their right and privilege to enjoy the pleasures of paradise in this mundane life.

The Hindu kings were as usual shortsighted and disunited. When one was invaded others never rushed to his rescue, but remained contented and even rejoiced themselves in private by being the silent spectators of the frightful drama in which one of their own brethren was victimised, as they inwardly thought it to be a happy omen that the episode did not concern them but their rich rival. It was only once in 1469 that the Hindu chiefs in Konkan united under the banner of Shankar Roy of Vishalgarha, and bravely faced the Bahmani army. The war dragged on for four years, and the Bahmani kings became masters of the coastal

strip of Konkan in 1473. The Bahmani kings under the able guidance of Mohomod Gowan conquered Rajamahendri on the eastern coast, by helping Ambar Roy of Odyia against his brother Mangal Roy. The policy of 'Divide and rule' is notorious for its efficacy from the times of Chanakya. The arbitrator is always richer than both the parties in the dispute, his illicit gain being always at their cost.

There was a terrible famine in the south from 1468 to 1475 which is known as the Septenary of Durgadevi or Durgadi. Millions of people lost their lives in this period on account of starvation while some saved themselves by changing their faith. Fortunately, Mohomod Gowan was the prime minister of the Bahmani kingdom at this time, and his generosity and broad-mindedness saved the Hindus in Maharashtra from complete extermination in this awful period. Damajipant of Mangalwedhe, a town near Pandharpur, who was a clerk in the service of the emperor, felt therefore no hesitation in throwing open the government granary to the hungry populace on his own initiative and responsibility. The wise premier not only pardoned Damajipant for his technical offence but highly commended him to the emperor as a humanitarian saint.

Mohomod Gowan great as he was as a general, statesman, savant and saint, was beheaded by the Bahmani king Mohomod Shaha II in 1481 who in a fit of drunkenness accused him of high treason at the instigation of some mean courtiers. The king repented of his folly soon after, but it was too late to undo the wrong already done to one of the greatest men of the 15th century. With the murder of Gowan, the Bahmani power collapsed and the governors one after another proclaimed their independence within a short period of about 10 years which was notorious for the bloody feuds and quarrels between the different noblemen of the Bahmani court. Street-fights and massacres were openly indulged in by interested parties from day to day. A reign of terror and lawlessness followed not only in the capital town but throughout the land. The king was virtually a prisoner in his own palace, his once loyal servants acting as his jail-guards. The powerful Bahmani kingdom was disrupted and fell to pieces. But the disruption of the powerful

Bahmani kingdom was not due to the disloyalty of the oppressed Hindu subjects. They had not the courage to rise in rebellion against their non-Hindu kings though enjoined by the Smritis (न म्लेंच्छराज्ये निवसेत्). The disruption was entirely due to the bloody feuds between Mahomedan noblemen themselves for power and lust. That a Mahomedan king should die a natural death was then considered rather an exceptional and astounding event. They were generally imprisoned, poisoned, blinded or killed either by their sons, brothers, nephews or other relations or by noblemen, generals, favourites or slaves, who wanted to profit by the king's death, and always considered that event as a stepping stone to future power and glory. Any elementary text-book in history will corroborate this statement even if perused superficially.

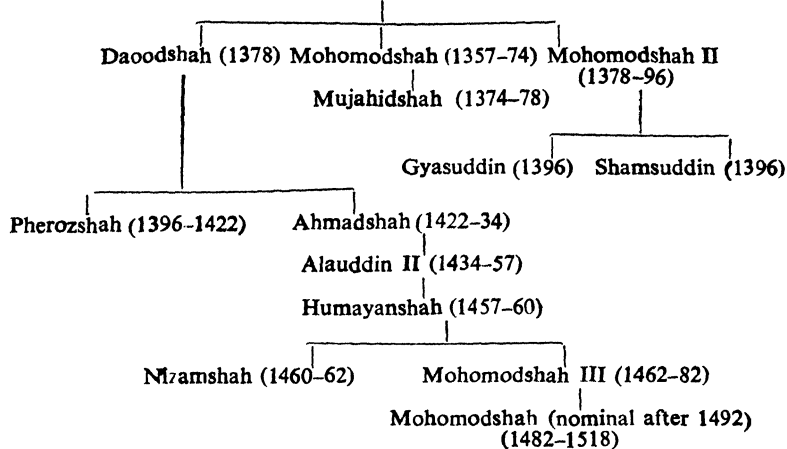
The Bahmani kings ruled over the Deccan directly over some tracts and indirectly over others. The petty princes, chiefs and jahagirdars, whether Hindu Rajas or Mahomedan Nabobs, acted as agents of the kings, collected revenues for them and sent annual tributes in addition which they in turn squeezed from their poor harassed subjects. These princes enjoyed some sort of autonomy in their respective domains. They had thus some power, and exercised a fairly large influence with their followers and subjects.

In some places the village panchayats acted as agents of the Kings and the Patels, Deshmukhs and Deshpandes who acted generally as presidents of the panchayats often formed the connecting links between the rulers and the ryots. This system made the people living in small villages self-reliant. They learnt that unity was strength, and relied on it for self-protection. Those who lived in large cities and towns however solely relied on the sovereign power for protection of their person, family and property and they had consequently often to dance in tune with the whims of their Muslim lords and their petty officers.



## Bahmani Sultans

Alauddin Husain Gango Bahmani (1347-57)



## XVIII

### VIJAYANAGAR

THE centre of Hindu religion and culture naturally receded further to the south as the power of the Bahmani kings increased in northern Deccan. The glory of Deogiri was transferred to Vijayanagar, a city on the southern bank of the Tungabhadra river. The capital town of the ancient ruling dynasty of that tract was Anagondi which was a fortified town on the northern bank of the river. Two brothers, Harihar and Bukka, who were in the employment of the kings of Warangal came to Anagondi for shelter when the kingdom of Warangal was completely conquered by the Khilji Sultans of Delhi in 1326. Harihar became a minister, and his brother Bukka a treasurer at Anagondi. But Anagondi was also captured by Sultan Mohomud Tughlakha in 1334, and the two brothers had to move to the southern bank of the Tungabhadra. Vidyaranya *alias* Madhavacharya the wisest man of the day who accompanied them from Warangal was their preceptor, and it was under his wise guidance that the foundation of Vijayanagar was laid in 1335. The history of Vijayanagar or the city of victory is a glorious chapter in the history of the Hindus in the south, and it can never be forgotten, though foreign historians may style it as 'a forgotten empire'.

Vijayanagar is certainly not situated in the present country of Maharashtra, but is on its border-line. Deogiri lost its independence in 1318, and Warangal in 1326. Vijayanagar thus inherited the glorious traditions of both Maharashtra and Tailangana. Scholars, preceptors, statesmen and soldiers from all parts of Maharashtra and Tailangana flocked to Vijayanagar which soon developed into a powerful centre of Hindu religion, philosophy, science, arts and culture. Both Hindu and Mahomedan merchants of India or other Asiatic countries like Persia and in later days even the Portuguese merchants from the west flocked to this new city and developed its trade. Beautiful buildings were built, temples erected and palaces constructed round about this new city. One can see the imposing ancient

ruins of Hampi even to-day, and therefrom construct by imagination a mental picture of the then splendour of Vijayanagar.

The history of Vijayanagar synchronizes with that of the Bahmani kingdom. Vijayanagar came into existence about ten years earlier than the Bahmani kingdom, and disappeared from the historical stage in 1565. The rise of Vijayanagar was phenomenal. Feristha says that even as early as in 1366 it was far more powerful than the Bahmani kingdom. The glory and splendour of Vijayanagar are romantically described by Nicolo Compte of Venice who visited that city sometime between 1420 and 1444. Abdur Razak visited Vijayanagar in 1443 when he came to that court as an ambassador of the Shah of Persia. These foreign travellers have recorded their impressions about that great city. 'Vijayanagar was the centre of trade in the Deccan and foreign merchants often visited that place and displayed their goods in the city markets for sale. People of Vijayanagar were very rich and encouraged fine arts. They built beautiful buildings and furnished them with artistic decorations. Gold was in circulation in abundance as there were mines of gold and diamonds in that country. People dressed in fine silk fabrics, and even the female slaves of the king's harem were richly dressed and used to wear costly ornaments.' The credit goes not only to the joint founders of the dynasty Harihar and Bukka, but also to their preceptor and first premier Vidyaranya who carefully planned and executed the foundation of this new Hindu kingdom. Vidyaranya was as great a statesman as Chanakya, but was perhaps more pious and of a saintly disposition than Kautilya. The writings, being of a contemporary period, furnish us with a faithful picture of that great capital city and of the powerful Hindu kings who ruled that country. Early travellers called that country as Narsinhadesha. Probably 'Narsinha', the fourth incarnation of Shri Vishnoo, was acknowledged and worshipped as the principal deity by the king and his subjects. In fact, temples of all the ten incarnations of Vishnoo were erected at Vijayanagar and it was the sight of the idol of Varaha (boar), the third incarnation of Vishnoo, which checked the devastation of that city in 1565 after the battle of Talikote at the hands of the fanatic Mahomedan soldiers to whom the

sight of the boar was nauseating and repulsive. Vijayanagar soon became the second line of defence of Hindu religion, culture and glory after the fall of Deogiri and Warangal. All the Hindu princes in the south gathered together to guard the Hindu banner of Vijayanagar. The Poyasala Ballal kings of the Yadava dynasty used to rule in the southernmost part of Karnataka with Dwarasamudra as their capital. They were defeated in 1310 by Malik Kafur, a general of Alauddin Khilji. They also rallied round the Vijayanagar banner along with their brothers in calamity from Maharashtra and Tailangana. The history of Vijayanagar is a proud record of the continuous fight of the Hindus in self-defence against Mahomedan invasions for about two hundred years. The Hindus are by nature peace-loving, and having once adopted the Budhist doctrine of Ahinsa as an integral part of Hinduism, they hated wars on account of the butchery of humanity involved in them. Life after death was dearer to them than the pleasures in this short earthly existence. They rather cared more for the next world than their present abode, and Moksha (eternal salvation) was more coveted than power or pelf. But they were obliged ultimately to face the stern facts of life, and wage a war with the Muslim rulers in the south for about two hundred years with great perseverance. Vijayanagar ultimately succumbed to the continuous Mahomedan aggression, and was completely destroyed in 1565 at the battle of Talikote, but its heroic efforts did not all go in vain as the long-drawn struggle proved of immense value as a training ground to Hindus. Vijayanagar is undoubtedly situated in Karnataka. The mother-tongue of the majority of the people in Narsinha-desha was Kanarese. But the founder-rulers of Vijayanagar came from Warangal in Tailangana, and probably their preceptor Madhavacharya also belonged to that country as from historical data he seems to have accompanied Harihar and Bukka to Vijayanagar. One, therefore, cannot definitely say whether the glory of Vijayanagar was the monopoly of Karnataka or Tailangana. Partisan historians of the two modern linguistic provinces are carrying on a sort of tug-of-war amongst themselves for the complete possession of the glorious past of Vijayanagar, and martialling documents, anecdotes and arguments in support

of their respective pet-theories. In the heat of discussion one is likely to forget the fact that Vijayanagar not only inherited the history of Warangal but also that of Deogiri, the capital of Maharashtra. Maharashtra being the topmost country in the Deccan is naturally more Aryan in blood and hence more virile than countries in the far south, as most of the Aryan invaders first settled in Vidarbha and other parts of Maharashtra, and only a comparatively few moved further south. Maharashtra was for ages the main connecting link between virile and aggressive Aryan India in the north and the doggedly defensive Dravidian Deccan in the south. The people of Maharashtra were treated with respect by other people in the Deccan, as they seemed to belong to the Aryan stock and spoke the Aryan tongue—Maharashtri or Marathi. Dravidian people in the south then prided in being called Aryans as they had adopted the religion of the Aryans and worshipped Sanskrit with devotion as the language of the Gods. Languages derived from Sanskrit were also naturally held in reverence by them. Consequently the relations between Maharashtra and the bordering country of Tailangana were very intimate from times immemorial. Shaliwahan, the first historical king of Maharashtra, who ruled at his capital Paithan, prided on being called an Andhrabhritya. Geographical proximity was only one of the causes of the intimacy between these two countries. Even when the caste-system in India became very rigid and linguistic barriers further restricted social and marital intercourse among Hindus, marriages freely took place between Maharashtra and Andhra Brahmans and also amongst other twice-born castes. Thousands of people from Tailangana migrated to Maharashtra, settled there and became one with the Maharashtrians. The present Marathi surnames such as Telangs, Anes, Wazalwars and others bear a living testimony to this historical fact. The kings of Maharashtra and Tailangana, though often on unfriendly terms between themselves, at times united and formed a common front to fight with the Aryan invaders of north, be they from Kanouj or Ujjain. Secondly, the Aryans conquered even the remote countries in the Deccan and ruled over them for centuries. The

Aryan rulers of these Dravidian countries naturally carried with them their Maharashtri or the derived Apabransha language to the remote corners of Southern India. With the transition of Maharashtri into Marathi through the Apabranshas, Marathi in some form or another became the language of the rulers of the south. This will explain why one of the earliest Marathi inscriptions is found at Shravan Belgola—almost the southern-most corner of Karnataka. Marathi was never the language of the people in that part even in the old days, but probably it was the language of the rulers as the Poyasala Ballal kings of Dwarasamudra claimed kinsmanship with the Yadava clan of Deogiri. Therefore, the part played by Maharashtra in the history of Vijayanagar must not have been insignificant, as it is well known that able persons from Deogiri, Warangal and Dwarasamudra flocked to the new Hindu court of Vijayanagar and became staunch supporters of the new centre of Hinduism. Marathas in thousands were recruited in the Vijayanagar army. But these narrow-minded and provincially prejudiced discussions are futile. It is the proud privilege of the whole Hindu race and not of one province or the other to sing the glorious history of Vijayanagar and uphold its traditions.

The dynasty founded by Harihar and Bukka nominally ruled over Vijayanagar till 1490 and then came to an abrupt end as Virupaksha Roy, the last king of that dynasty, was weak and worthless. There was a revolution in the State, and the king was killed with his relatives in the affray. Narsinha Roy who was his powerful minister, was then proclaimed as the new king of Vijayanagar. It is curious to note that the Bahmani kingdom was also disrupted about the same year. The two hundred years' war between the two powers commenced in 1365. The rich and fertile Doab between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers was the principal bone of contention. It is a famous historical cock-pit in the south as Panipat is in the north. The districts of Raichur and Mudgal in the Doab together with other forts and towns in the vicinity often changed their masters in this long-drawn struggle. In 1406, however, the two kings fought with each other, because both of them wanted to have 'Nihal', a beautiful daughter of a goldsmith of Mudgal, as an ornament

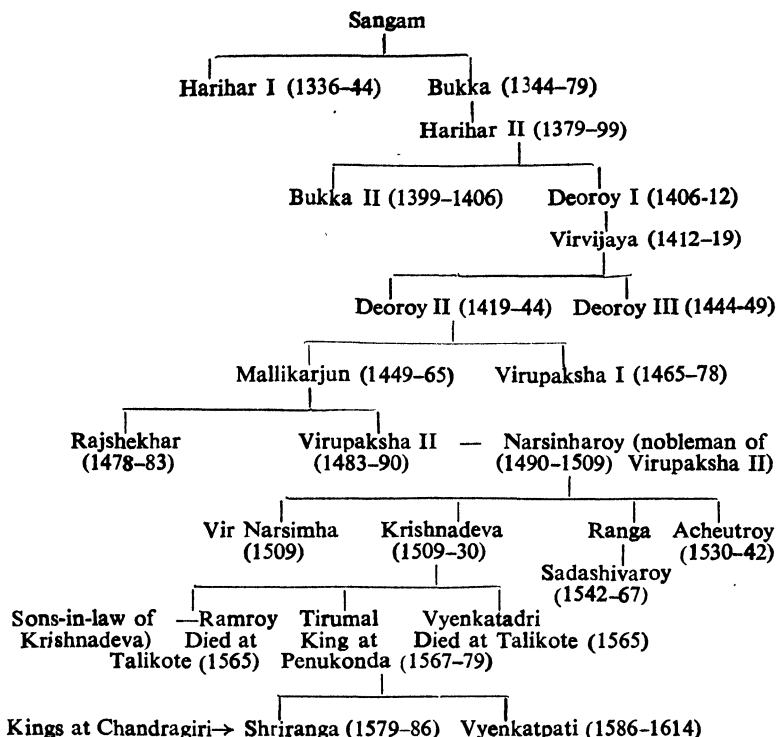
for their respective harems. Firoz Shah was successful, and his opponent Deva Raja I had to sue for peace on the most ignominious terms. He gave his young daughter in marriage to the old Sultan, and ceded the fort of Bankapur with the surrounding region to the Sultan as the wedding dowry of his daughter. All pretensions to the hand of the beautiful Nihal, were also relinquished by the king of Vijayanagar, as she preferred to be the lawful wedded wife of a Muslim youth rather than spend her life as a concubine and mistress in the Hindu king's harem, as the existing caste system prevented her marriage with the Hindu king. She was ultimately married according to her wishes to Hasan Khan, the Sultan's eldest son. The kings of Vijayanagar had generally to purchase peace by offering gold and diamonds in large quantities as tribute to the Bahmani kings, as the Hindu rulers were often defeated on the battle-field in this long struggle, and they had wealth in abundance as trade flourished and agriculture prospered in the Vijayanagar kingdom. The glory of Vijayanagar rested on a golden foundation rather than on feats of arms, valour and strength.

The kings of Vijayanagar had fortunately very able and learned ministers who knew the art of converting a defeat into victory at the time of peace negotiations and even after. Madhavacharya and later on his brother Sayanacharya, the famous commentator of Vedas and Upanishadas, were ministers of the Vijayanagar kings. Naganna, Appayya Dixit and other learned men were their advisers. They had ample resources in men and money. They had elephants, horses and guns, but they did not prove a match to their foes who were more courageous and tenacious and also possessed more physical prowess. The Hindu kings were as luxurious as their Muslim opponents and spent a large portion of their time in their harems. Their administrative machinery was loose and unsystematic, and failed to give sympathetic justice to their subjects. The poor down-trodden Hindus often preferred Muslim rule to that of the Hindu kings and their high-caste aristocracy. Religious fervour and national idealism were confined to the Hindu ruling class only, and had not permeated to the masses who were content with their hearths, homes, fields and temples.

The dynasty founded by Narsinha Roy in 1490 was, however, more fortunate. Because the powerful Bahmani kingdom was by that time divided into five separate units, which were often at war with one another, as all the rulers of the five kingdoms newly formed were anxious to extend their own dominions and increase their power. The internal quarrels of these five Mahomedan kings gave not only a respite to Vijayanagar but increased its prestige. The help of Vijayanagar was often sought by one Muslim king or the other, and Vijayanagar often profited by these temporary military alliances at the cost of the Mahomedan Sultans. Krishnadeva Roy gained a great victory over the Mahomedans in 1520, and routed them. The famous Raichur Doab again came into his possession. But this victory was very short-lived. The Mahomedans grown wiser by this tragedy soon composed their differences, and united together against Vijayanagar. The internal feuds between the Mahomedans were stopped or at least suspended. The king of Ahmednagar gave his daughter Chand Bibi in marriage to Ali Adil Shah of Vijapur, who in turn gave his sister to Murtuza, Husain Nizamshaha's son. The compact between the Mahomedan powers was thus solemnly sealed by marital relations, and Vijayanagar was doomed to perish. The battle of Talikote or Rakshas Tagdi was fought on the 2nd January 1565, and Vijayanagar was crushed to death. Sadashiva Roy was then the nominal king of Vijayanagar, but the real power was vested in the premier Ram Roy and his brothers Tirumal and Venkatadri who were generals in the Vijayanagar army. The brothers Ram Roy and Tirumal were also sons-in-law of Krishnadeva Roy, the late king of Vijayanagar. The defeat was so decisive that the great Hindu kingdom absolutely collapsed and made its exit from Indian history. The old ruins of Hampi eloquently describe the sad episode to travellers and visitors even to-day. Vijayanagar as a first-rate Hindu power in the Deccan vanished on that day, though Tirumal and his descendants carried on a lingering struggle for some years more in the further south.



## VIJAYANAGAR KINGS



## XIX

### BHAGAWAT-DHARMA

THE history of Bhagwat-dharma in Maharashtra is very succinctly described in the following Abhanga, known to all devotees of Pandharpur (वारकरी सांप्रदाय).

“ ज्ञानदेवें रचिला पाया । रचियेलें देवालय ॥  
नामा तयाचा किंकर । तेणें केला हा विस्तार ॥  
जनार्दनी एकनाथ । ध्वज उभारी भागवत ॥  
भजन करा सावकाश । तुका झालासे कळस ॥ ”

“Dnyandeve laid the foundation of this temple. Namadeva who was his servant added extensively to it. Eknath, the disciple of Janardhan, raised the banner of Bhagwat-dharma on high. Sing your prayers now at ease, for Tukaram has become the pinnacle of that temple.”

Eknath was born in 1548 A.D. about 250 years after the death of Dnyaneshvara. He was a Brahmin and a married man of the world. He became a disciple of Janardhan Swamy who was an accountant at the fort of Deogiri. He wrote his famous commentary on Bhagwat (20,000 verses) in 31 chapters in 1573. This was followed by other works such as ‘Rukhmini-Swayamwar’, ‘Balkrida’, ‘Pralhadcharitra’, ‘Bhavartha-Ramayana’, etc. He combines scholarship with lucidity and devotion. His works are consequently not only popular, but also held in reverence. But his greatest contribution to Bhagwat-dharma is the masterly way in which he edited ‘Dnyaneshvari’ which then contained several unauthorized interpolations. As the art of printing was then unknown in Maharastra, the copies of ‘Dnyaneshvari’ in circulation differed very much from one another, and it was difficult to guess the exact wording of Dnyaneshvar on account of the great lapse of time. He collected several old copies of the great work, and determined its exact wording by expunging all interpolations after comparing various old copies with one another and finally sitting in judgment on them. He corrected the grammatical and other mistakes which had crept in the work, and issued a standard edition in 1584. His task as a research

scholar must have been very difficult as printing was not then known and literary works were preserved either by memorization or by the art of calligraphy which afforded ample opportunities of introducing interpolations in old works, intentionally or unintentionally. Almost simultaneously with this task he paid a visit to Alandi, and found out after diligent search the exact spot of the Samadhi of Dnyaneshwar, cleared the holy shrine from the surrounding wild forest growth and executed repairs to the same. He thus paid a debt of gratitude to the founder of Bhagwat-dharma, who was adored by all devotees of Pandurang, and whose memory was dearer to Eknath than life itself. Eknath was an ideal saint. He worked hard and earned his living. He was generous to a fault, and treated Brahmins and Harijans alike, though an orthodox Brahmin himself. He was kind to animals, and did not consider it a sin to give the water of the river Ganges originally intended for worship, for quenching the thirst of a dying donkey on the street. Nor did he feel any compunction in serving the food originally prepared and intended for Brahmins invited for the Shraddha ceremony of his father to the famished and hungry Mahars and Dheds in the street. Even his son did not like his catholic actions and views. But he loved the world and lived in peace. He never lost his temper though grossly abused and insulted, but had always a kind word to say to his tyrants and oppressors, who were in turn much impressed by the purity of his life and simplicity of manners.

Eknath, while returning from the banks of the river Godavari after his bath, was spat upon by a Mahomedan fanatic. Eknath instead of becoming wild with him calmly went back to the river and had a second bath, but on his way back again met the same fate at the hands of the same ruffian. Eknath again went to the river in silence and immersed himself in the sacred waters a third time, but with no better luck. This happened 108 times on that memorable day. The Mahomedan ruffian ultimately repented of his folly and wickedness, and prostrated himself at the feet of Eknath and sought his pardon which Eknath freely granted. The wicked man became his disciple and staunch supporter thereafter, and became a devotee of Bhagwat-dharma.

Eknath is rightly called a Mahatma. He was a follower of truth and loved his fellow-beings irrespective of their creeds. His life naturally made a deep impression on people. He had a large following,—Premdas, Dasopant, Niranjan, Vithal Rangnath being some of his prominent followers. But his greatest disciple was Mukteshvara who was also his grandson (daughter's son). He wrote easy but beautiful Marathi poetry, and thereby popularized the stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata with their philosophical settings. Mukteshvara is one of the powerful story-tellers in verse of the old age.

The greatest saint and expounder of Bhagwat-dharma was Tukaram. He belonged to the masses. He was an agriculturist Kunbi (Maratha) by caste and a grocer by profession. He was a very poor man and lived an unhappy life, as his wife Awalai was by temperament a shrew. She loved her husband intensely, but did not like his saintliness which blinded him completely to the wants and miseries of the family. His wife and children were often famished, and his first wife and one child actually died of starvation in a famine. But Tukaram was unruffled. He had full faith in Panduranga and spent his days in composing and singing Abhangas and spreading the gospel of love, peace and devotion among the common people. He was not a learned Pundit. His poetry is simple, and his philosophy is based on the experience gained by him in his life-time. People thought him to be an incarnation of Namadeva, because he wrote his poetry in the same style and in the same simple and musical metre in which Namadeva wrote. He was born at Dehu, a village on the bank of the river Indrayani, in 1608, and lived there all his life. Twice every year he went on pilgrimage to Pandharpur to bow down his head at the feet of his God Shri Vitthal, whom he loved as his own soul. He was often lost in ecstasy while singing his prayers and performing Kirtans on the sandy banks of the river Chandrabhaga at Pandharpur. People were so much impressed by his appealing prayers and loving and living devotion to God that he was unanimously acclaimed in his own life-time as the greatest saint of Bhagwat-dharma. While dancing in devotional ecstasy, he remembered the great spiritual patron saint of Bhagwat-dharma—Dnyaneshvar—and cried aloud with

an anguished heart 'Gyanba-Gynanba' (a short Apabhramsha) when thousands of pilgrims assembled there would with one voice supplement his devotional cry with the word 'Tukaram' indicating thereby that they considered him to be on the same spiritual level as Dnyaneshvara or Gyanba. Since then 'Gyanba-Tukaram' has become the popular incantation of Bhagwat-dharma, and all devotees of Pandharpur even to this day delight in melodiously voicing these two names together a million times day after day and from year to year. Tukaram though very popular with the masses, was often persecuted by orthodox Brahmins who considered it a great sacrilege that Tukaram, a Shudra by birth, should have the audacity of preaching the philosophy contained in the Upanishadhas to the common people through the medium of his Marathi Abhangas. Rameshvarbhat once ordered him to throw his poems in the Indrayani river as a penance for his alleged sins. Tukaram literally followed his advice, and remained on the river-bank for eleven full days and nights together without food, praying constantly to God. Ultimately the copy-books were found one day floating on the river in quite a dry condition. This miracle converted Rameshvarbhat from a persecutor to a disciple of Tukaram. The great king Shivaji on hearing the fame of this ascetic-minded married saint sent him once a rich present consisting of gold, silver and jewels. Tukaram though a pauper did not touch a single article but returned them all to the donor against the wishes of his wife and children, with the remark that gold and dust were of the same value to a real devotee of God, as the great Almighty unasked supplied freely all his wants. Tukaram considered wealth as a great temptation in the path of self-realization through extreme devotion, and spurned at it. When Tukaram felt that the mission of his life was over, he either drowned himself in the river Indrayani or buried himself alive in a cave on its bank in 1649 with the remarkable parting words :—

‘आम्ही जातो आमुच्या गांवा । आमुचा रामराम ध्यावा ॥’

‘I am going to my own city. Accept my parting salute.’

He followed Dnyaneshvara in taking Samadhi while alive, as life had no other charm for both of them except as the means for the fulfilment of the life-mission for which they

inwardly felt that they were on purpose sent to the earth by God. Bhagwat-dharma was the Maharashtrian aspect of the all-India cult of Vaishnavism. Great spiritual leaders felt that Hinduism was in danger as the Mahomedans invaded and conquered gradually the whole of India. Muslim conquest was invariably accompanied or at least followed by the spread of Islam. Temples were often razed to the ground, and idols of Hindu deities were shattered to pieces by the Muslim invaders, and Mosques built in their places. The orthodox Hindu rites and rituals were difficult to perform and expensive to boot under the changed circumstances. Muslim rulers had hardly any religious toleration when they first settled in India. Even a good, able, learned and wise ruler like Feroze Tughlakha persecuted the Hindus, destroyed their temples, broke their deities, burnt their books, prevented their festivals and levied the Jizia tax on them.

Ahmadshah Bahmani earned the reputation of being a saint among his Mahomedan followers who out of respect gave him the title of "Wali". But his saintly character was confined to the Mahomedans only. He hated Hinduism and oppressed Hindus. He burned their temples and forcibly converted them.

There was another source of danger to Hinduism at that time. The onslaught came from the west. The western nations became great maritime powers at the close of the 15th century due to the invention of the magnetic compass and other allied scientific devices. The knowledge of gun powder strengthened their arms. The Portuguese were then the most advanced of all the European powers. Vasco de Gama landed at Calicut in 1498 after an arduous voyage round the African coast. Albuquerque conquered Goan from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1510. Soon after, the Portuguese conquered Cochin, Cannanore, Quilon and Div, and built fortresses there. They occupied Bassein and Thana in 1529 and Mangalore, Choul and Bombay soon after. They also became masters of Aden, Colombo and other important ports on the sea-route from Europe to India. The Portuguese were as great religious fanatics as the northern Mahomedans, and consequently persecuted their Hindu subjects and forcibly converted them to Christianity. The inquisitional tribunal set up

by them at Goan after the western traditions created havoc in the land. The Dutch, the French and the English followed them to India about a hundred years later. The Dutch concentrated on trade only. The French and the English were not only eager to push their trade but also tried to establish political power in India because they considered that trade would not prosper unless backed by political power and wealth acquired by trade would be a help to build the political power. They rightly appreciated the relation between the two important functions of colonization. The third aspect—spread of religion—was stressed by the Portuguese and the Muslim rulers only. All these three powers were, however, totally indifferent to the spread of Christianity. But the Portuguese were the greatest offenders in this respect, and as their capital town Goan was situated in Maharashtra, the Marathas suffered the most at their hands. For purposes of their ever-flourishing trade they were on friendly terms with the kings of Vijayanagar and the Mahomedan Sultans as well, and looked after their own interests only. But they were indulgent towards the followers of the Muslim faith and harassed only the Hindus. The Maratha saints had naturally to warn the Hindus against this dual religious fanaticism and persecution, both of the Mlenchas and the Feranghis, and to devise ways and means of protecting Hinduism, which on account of its passivistic tendency was losing ground step by step every day. Vaishnavism was an attempt of simplifying Hindu religion by the substitution of devotion in place of the performance of old rites and rituals. This new cult required no priests and no Sanskrit incantations. Any one could pray at home through his mother-tongue provided he was sincere and had a firm faith in God. Devotion had the same ethical and religious value as philosophical knowledge and ancient religious practices, and had the special advantage of requiring no special previous preparation on the part of the devotees. It was within the easy reach of all—the rich and the poor, men and women, the learned pundits and the ignorant farmers, labourers and artisans and both the Brahmins and the Shudras. Mirabai and Narsi Mehtha in Gujerath, Chandidasa, Vidyapati and Krishna Chaitanya *alias* Gouranga Prabhu in Bengal and Surdasa and Tulsidasa in the United Provinces were all saints and prophets

of this new cult. Some Mahomedans like Sheik Mohomod and Kabir also embraced this devotional cult, and like Nanak tried to soften the acute differences between the two warring faiths, and were treated with respect by all Hindus. This movement, however, was not confined to the classes in Maharashtra but permeated to the masses. In fact, the classes remained aloof from this movement as far as they could. There is not a single caste or sub-caste in Maharashtra which did not produce a great prophet-saint of Bhagwat-dharma during the period 1287 to 1649, *i.e.*, from the time of 'Dnyaneshvari' to that of 'Tukaram-Gatha'. Marathi was enriched, and a valuable literature was produced in this period. The literature was largely written by the saints on their own spiritual and mundane experiences in life. Caste-exclusiveness disappeared, and a spirit of common Hindu brotherhood took its place. The Shudras were raised to the same spiritual power and social status as that enjoyed by the Brahmins. Love and faith took the place of rites and rituals. The Marathas though under foreign domination, were more united than ever. They were poor, and were often persecuted by their rulers. But they all loved their rugged hilly country, they all prayed individually or in congregation in their mother-tongue Marathi with sincere devotion to their common deity—the Vithoba of Pandharpur, they jointly marched for Ashadhi and Kartiki Ekadashis on a pilgrimage to that sacred place and they all loved one another as brothers. They forgot their worldly miseries and bondage in devotional ecstasy, and worked always with a happy and contented frame of mind without caring for reward. If they earned the fruit of their labour they thanked God for the same, and in case they were less fortunate they considered it to be the fruit of their sins in past birth, and hoped for a better luck in next birth as a reward for their devotion in the present life. Their deity was an embodiment of love and peace and an emblem of high spiritual life.



## THE MUSLIM KINGS IN THE DECCAN

**TAKING** advantage of the internal bloody dissensions and feuds at Bedar, the capital-seat of Bahmani kings, Fateullah Imadshah, a Telanga convert, was the first to proclaim his independence. He was governor of Berar under the Bahmani Raj. He was the founder of Imadshahi of Berar with Ellichpur as his capital. He proclaimed himself as an independent king of Berar in 1484, but soon after he died and was succeeded by his son Alauddin Imadshah who removed his capital to the fort of Govilgarha. Ahmad Nizamshah and Yusuf Adilshah followed suit, and they proclaimed themselves as independent kings of Ahmednagar and Bijapur respectively in 1489. Mohomodsha Bahmani was then only 18 years of age, and was a mere puppet in the hands of his minister Kasim Berid. In 1492, Kasim Berid took the reins of the Bedar Government in his own hands, and in the same year he encouraged Kuli Kutubshah of Goalkonda to proclaim his independence. Mohomodshah Bahmani lived the miserable life of a nominal king till 1518, but really the Bahmani power came to an end in 1492 or in fact even earlier.

Five independent Muslim kingdoms thus came into existence in the Deccan after the collapse of the Bahmani power. The five new dynasties were known as Beridshahi of Bedar, Imadshahi of Berar, Kutubshahi of Goalkonda, Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar and Adilshahi of Bijapur. The Beridshahi and Kutubshahi were situated in Tailangana, the Imadshahi and Nizamshahi were comprised in Maharashtra, and the Adilshahi was established in Karnataka. This will indicate the extent and power of the Bahmani kings. Of these, Beridshahi and Imadshahi were destroyed by Adilshahi and Nizamshahi kings who invaded, defeated and killed the Beridshahi and Imadshahi kings or the usurpers who were in power there instead, and confiscated the kingdoms, even before the battle of Talikote. The three great Muslim powers thus left in the Deccan were Goalkonda, Ahmednagar and Bijapur. The unholy alliance of these three

great powers was responsible for the rout and downfall of Vijayanagar. The almost extinguished members of Bedar and Ellichpur also took part in the destruction of Vijayanagar. The Bahmani kings were very powerful, and though in general they ruled the country wisely, they did not much care to win the affections of their Hindu subjects. Only Mahomedans were originally employed in the State and enlisted in the army. It was in fact a Mahomedan aristocracy which ruled over Maharashtra, Tailangana and Karnataka. The Bahmani kings were not at all afraid of Vijayanagar. On the other hand, they treated Vijayanagar as a favourite milch cow which yielded ransom at the slightest pressure. The only formidable foe of whom they were really afraid was ruling at Delhi, and he had neither the time nor the leisure to march against the far-off Deccan. The Mahomedan emperors of Delhi could hardly afford to leave the north for a long time, as the governors in different provinces were anxiously waiting for such an opportunity to proclaim their independence. The emperors of Delhi were consequently obliged to be always on the alert so that they could crush the slightest attempt at insubordination in any distant corner of their vast but unsettled empire, before it could bloom into an open rebellion. Both Hindu and Muslim kings in the Deccan solicited the help of the Delhi emperors on various occasions either for purposes of self-defence or for an aggressive pact, and promised them large tracts of land and huge sums of money as tributes, but the Delhi emperors were adamant and refused to march to the south, as they felt that even their temporary absence from the north would endanger their power and imperil their empire. Under these circumstances why should the Bahmani kings care to enlist the sympathies of their Hindu subjects for their cause? A few Maratha noblemen, however, were occasionally employed by the Bahmani kings in the army in times of war, and a few Brahmins employed for revenue settlement of the newly conquered districts or for purposes of financial adjustments when difficulties encountered them. Dadaji Narsinha, Kamraj Ghatge and Vajrapal Shirke are some of the important Maratha personages in this period. The general policy of the Bahmani kings was, however, to keep the Hindus aloof from positions

of power and trust. But the disruption of the Bahmani kingdom into five separate and independent Sultanates changed the entire aspect of the question. Each of these Sultans was eager to enlarge his dominions and extend the sphere of his influence. These Sultans began to wage wars against each other, and wars could not be successfully waged unless there was internal peace and the subjects contented. In fact, the Sultans soon found it necessary to enlist the active support and co-operation of some of their Hindu subjects, while they tried their best to win the passive sympathy of the rest for their cause. For, no king can afford to leave his dominions for long with his army, as the dominions, if left unguarded, would easily be invaded by others. And if there was discontent among the people in addition, it would hardly be possible for the king to retain his kingdom for long as the smouldering sparks of discontent soon burst out in revolutionary flames with the slightest breeze from outside. Discontented people only wait for a suitable opportunity to throw off the foreign yoke, and which opportunity would be more suitable for this purpose than an inter-provincial war. The political situation in Delhi was also much changed. The unstable Sultanate disappeared from Northern India, and the powerful Moghul emperors ruled at Delhi instead. Akbar, the great, ascended the Delhi throne in 1556 and he soon brought the whole of Northern India under his control. His ambition was to govern the whole of India like Samrat Yudhistir, Asoka or Vikrama, and when his power was firmly consolidated in the north, he marched to the Deccan at the head of his powerful army. The Mahomedan kings of the Deccan were disunited and hence they were unable to face the invincible hordes and unlimited resources of the Moghul emperors with their Mahomedan followers alone. They were obliged, therefore, to humour their Hindu subjects and win their sympathy. The Hindus naturally preferred the Deccani Hinduized Sultans to the northern Moghul emperors. Because the Sultans in the south though Muslim by religion, wanted to preserve their independence which also indirectly meant the independence of the Deccan from the foreign yoke. The Sultans had become familiar to their Hindu subjects by long associations and had adopted many

Hindu customs. They had married Hindu girls and appointed Hindu converts as their ministers and generals. Many of them had Hindu blood by their mother's side. Their government also was just and systematic due to the untiring efforts of two great ministers, Mohomod Gowan and Malik Amber. Malik Amber who was an Abyssinian by birth rose to prominence by his merit and became the prime minister of Nizamshahi of A'hməd-nagar. He largely followed the policy of Raja Todarmal in determining the value of land and settling its assessment. They were good governments if not national governments. Justice was always impartial when Mahomedans did not form one of the contending parties in the suit. The wars between the Sultans in the Deccan and the Mog'hul emperors of Delhi lasted for about a hundred years, and consequently the interests of the Mahomedan Sultans and their Hindu subjects became identical and the Muslim Sultans in the Deccan who once prided in remaining aloof from their Hindu subjects, found it necessary to merge completely their individuality with the masses in national interest. The Delhi emperors who had become very powerful tried to extend their power to the south of the Vindhya mountains and the Nerbuda and Tapti rivers. They wanted to bring the whole of India under the control of the central power at Delhi. The Delhi emperors from Akbar to Aurangzeb were continually engaged in subjugating the Deccan. But the whole of Deccan was never subjugated by them. Instead they themselves broke in the attempt, when resisted by the hardy, supple and tenacious Marathas in the south who were inspired by a spiritual and religious national fervour, and who were commanded by one whom they regarded as an incarnation of God.

The Hindus were gradually enlisted in the civil services in all the five Muslim States. They were granted freedom to observe their religious festivals. Their customs and manners were respected, and their temples began to share grants from the State with mosques in the vicinity. The Marathas who generally descended from the aggressive Aryan stock formed the most forward and domineering block of the Hindu populace in the three provinces of Maharashtra, Tailangana and Karnataka. The two hundred years' war between Vijayanagar and the Mahomedan

kingdoms had taught the Marathas practical lessons of offensive and defensive tactics, and converted even the docile Maratha agriculturists into formidable soldiers and warriors. Soon after the fall of Vijayanagar, Sadashiva Roy, the puppet king, was murdered and as Ram Roy was already slain on the battle-field Tirumal after declaring himself as the king, shifted his capital further south to Penukonda, and his son Shriranga in his turn had to shift still further to the south when hardpressed by the Sultans of Goalkonda. Chandragiri was the new capital where Shriranga ruled till 1586. The Maratha soldiers who were enlisted in the army of Vijayanagar were naturally unwilling to move further south far away from their homes, and returned to Maharashtra soon after 1565 and offered their services to the victorious Sultans who had already enlisted some of their countrymen long before. The trained and experienced soldiers were gradually enlisted in the armies of the Mahomedan Sultans. The Marathas held high ranks and rose to prominence not only in the Nizamshahi kingdom in Maharashtra, but also in Kutubshahi of Tailangana and Adilshahi of Karnataka, Beridshahi and Imadshahi having practically disappeared before the battle of Talikote. The rise of the Marathas under the Nizamshahi Sultans is a natural event which needs no explanation, but the prominence which they attained in Goalkonda and Bijapur is a clear indication of the fact that the Marathas had already become famous for their warlike racial characteristics and political wisdom throughout the Deccan, and they were therefore eagerly enlisted by the Mahomedan Sultans both in the civil services and in the army. Marathi was consequently recognized as one of the important official languages under the Muslim rulers of the Deccan so much so that even Modi script was used at times in writing letters and keeping accounts not only at Ahmednagar but also at Bijapur, the centre of Karnataka.

The gram-panchayats in Maharashtra which had begun to function under the Bahmani kings, developed rapidly and became progressive and powerful associations under these Muslim kings. They collected revenues, paid the official dues, undertook the responsibility of paying both usual and unusual taxes, distributed justice evenly to the villagers, taught the village youths, looked

after their physical welfare, protected their homes and crops from the devastations of wild animals, robbers and wandering bands of soldiers, looked after the forests, supplied guides to travellers, when and if necessary, and undertook the responsibility of doing casual repairs to the neighbouring forts and their approaches. The Patel or the Deshmukh of the village was the *ex-officio* Sirpanch, and recommended the strong and able youths in the village for civil and military service both to officials and non-officials. The panchayats used to collect subscriptions from the people and build therefrom new wells, tanks, dharma-shalas and temples, when necessary, or keep the existing ones in good order by doing repairs at intervals. They also controlled markets, fares and religious festivals. In short, they were self-contained small governing units and any change in the central government did not materially affect them. Instead of paying government dues to A they had to pay them to B instead. The political revolutions were mostly confined to capital-towns and large cities. Villages were hardly affected thereby, and if perchance a village suffered on account of the political revolution, it was considered merely as an unavoidable providential mishap such as famine or a visit of locusts. These powerful and self-reliant panchayats which looked indifferently towards the Muslim governments, helped the Marathas both passively and actively when they became determined to become masters in their own country.

The Marathas first entered service on sufferance. They were tolerated at the beginning of their probationary period, but at the end of that period their work was appreciated, and they were promoted to higher ranks after being patted on the back. Gradually they became indispensable to the rulers, and so were treated as loyal and exalted friends and allies. But when they became very powerful, the Muslim rulers and their co-religionist noble men were afraid of them, and began to devise ways and means of destroying them. The Marathas who were subservient in the beginning became self-assertive when they learnt that they were indispensable, which was often mistaken by their Mahomedan brethren as arrogance or impudence. The Maratha chiefs who were virtually masters of their petty jahagirs began to enlist

soldiers whom they could implicitly trust in their private employ and in their private capacity. These Maratha soldiers were often useful to the chieftains for purposes of self-defence in those troublesome times, and also raised their importance in the eyes of their neighbours. Rich and powerful Patels who had the necessary qualities of leadership became Deshmukhs, and big landlords often styled themselves as Rajas. The Maratha Kshatriya families often styled themselves as Rajes, while those in the far south called themselves Rajus to indicate their Rajput origin. The soldiery employed by them gave them also the necessary dignity and status, and the Mahomedan rulers and their co-religionist noblemen also began to count on their help and co-operation in times of war. The Sultans had to spend nothing for the maintenance of this private army in times of peace, the expenses being defrayed by the chieftains concerned from their own private revenues. But these bands of private Maratha soldiers when mobilized in times of war formed a respectable army of both cavalry and infantry for either offensive or defensive purposes. The history of Adilshahi, Kutubshahi and Nizamshahi kings in the Deccan is replete with Maratha names and surnames such as Jadhava, More, Nimbalkar, Bhonsale, Shirke, Chavan, Ghatge, Pawar, Ghorpade, Mane, Salunkhe, Kadam, Mohite, Sarjerao, Jagdeorao, Udhavarao, Dadoji, Santaji, Morarrao and a host of other similar names. The Mahomedan rulers in the south were thus virtually controlled both in the civil and military departments by Maratha statesmen and Maratha warriors at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century. The hill-forts near the ghats and elsewhere in the rugged country were in the hands of the Maratha jahagirdars who were nominally subordinate to the Muslim kings. They were powerful but disunited. These separatist tendencies prevented them for long from facing the Mahomedan power in the open field. "What was wanted was a new spirit, a common feeling of interest, a common patriotism born of a liberal religious fervour. The scattered power of the Maratha chiefs had to be united in a confederacy, animated by a common purpose and sanctified by a common devotion to the country."

## MUSLIM KINGS IN DECCAN

### I. Imadshahi of Berar

Fateulla Imadshaha (1484)

Alauddin Imadshah (1484–1527)

Darya Imadshah (1527–72)

### II. Beridshahi of Bedar

Kasim Berid (1492–1504)

Amir Berid (1504–49)

Ali Berid (1549–62)

Ibrahim Berid (1562–65)

Kasim Berid II (1569–72)

### III. Kutubshahi of Goalkonda

Kuli Kutubshah (1518–1543)

Jamshid (1543–50)

Ibrahim (1550–81)

Mohomod

Mohomod Kuli (1581–1611)

Abdulla Kutubshah (1611–58)

(Son-in-law) Abu Hasan (1658–87)

### IV. Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar

Ahmad Nizamshah (1490–1508)

Burham Nizamshah I (1508–53)

Shah Tahir

Murtuza II (1599–1631)

Husain (1553–65)

Abdul Kadar

Ahmad (1594–95) Husain (1631–33)

Chand Bibi Murtuza (1565–86)

Burhan II (1590–94)

Miran Husain (1586–89)

Ibrahim (1595)

Ismail (1589–90)

Bahaddur (1595–99)

Murtuza III (1633–36) Regent—Shahaji Bhonsle.

### V. Adilshahi of Vijapur

Yusuf-Adilshah (1489–1511)

Ismail Adilshah (1511–34)

Mallu (1534–35)

Ibrahim (1535–57)

Shah Tahnasp

Ali Adilshah (1557–79)

Ibrahim II (1579–1626)

Mohomod (1626–56)

Ali Adilshah II (1656–72)

Sikandar Ali (1672–86)





## XXI

### THE BHONSLAS

THE Maratha families which rose to prominence and greatness at Ahmednagar and Bijapur are numerous. Maval was comparatively a poor country and the Muslim noblemen were not very eager to be installed in posts of responsibility and power in that tract, as they loved luxury too along with power. The Marathas were thus practically masters in Maval and most of the Sahyadri hill-forts were held by them. The country round about the hill-fort is always at the mercy of the 'Killedar'. The Sultans were anxious to conquer the southernmost countries of the Deccan which were reported to be rich and fertile. The More family ruled over a large tract of Wadi and Satara and Javali was their capital. The hereditary titles of 'Chandraraao' and 'Raje' were conferred on them by the Sultans of Bijapur. Baji Ghorpade of Mudhol, the Nimbalkars of Phaltan, the Savants of Kudal and Wadi and the Surves of Shringarpur were powerful Maratha chiefs who owed their allegiance to the Adilshahi Sultans of Bijapur. These Maratha rulers also controlled the Konkan coast and the Ghats from Maval to Konkan.

The Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar was practically controlled by the Maratha chiefs. The Jadhavas of Sindkhed were the most powerful of all the Marathas at the Nizamshahi court, as they had an army of 25,000 soldiers—infantry and cavalry together—at their command. The Bhonslas rose to prominence much later but soon surpassed all the other Maratha chiefs in glory and valour. The Bhonslas were as good Kshatriyas as the Jadhavas, Mores or the Nimbalkars, and considered themselves to be the forgotten descendants of the Shisodiyas of Udaipur. Every Maratha Kshatriya then claimed his descent from the Rajputs—either the solar or the lunar clan, but the Rajputs always considered them to be inferior Kshatriyas. Jeysinha of Jaipur plainly wrote to Aurangzeb in later days that his family would be polluted even by interdining with the Bhonslas, as they were far below him in social rank and status and belonged to an inferior caste. Could

he have dared to write such a blasphemous letter had the Bhonslas really belonged to the Shisodiya Rajput clan? In that case he would have considered it an honour to give his daughter in marriage to a Bhonsla prince though comparatively poor and of a lower political rank. The bards in Rajputana may sing that the Bhonslas were the descendants of the Udaipur Ranas and thus participate in their glorious exploits but they could never induce even a petty Rajput chief to give his daughter in marriage even to an independent and powerful Maratha prince. Even when Shivaji Maharaj was crowned as king of Maharashtra, by Vedic Mantras, by the learned Pundit Gagabhat and publicly acknowledged as a true Kshatriya of the Shisodiya solar clan, the Rajputs never condescended to have marital ties with the Marathas. Every Kshatriya in the north considered himself to be superior to one in the south. The Rajputs looked down upon the Maratha Kshatriyas who in their turn treated the extreme southerners as outcastes. The Jadhavas of Sindkhed who claimed descent from the Yadavas of Deogiri considered the Bhonslas to be of an inferior caste though they were themselves considered to belong to a lower caste by the Rajputs. The Bhonslas were certainly Kshatriyas and proved to be better Kshatriyas than the Rajputs by their glorious achievements. But they were certainly not Rajputs. They were Aryans no doubt who had sometime or other descended to the south from the north and once belonged to the same common Aryan stock as the Rajputs, but they were not the descendants of the Rajputs. Ptolemy who wrote his Geography in 150 A.D. described Maharashtra as 'Ariake' (Aryan country) and its inhabitants as Aryans. The Persians are Aryans and the Germans too claim to be pure Aryans, but neither the Persians nor the Germans can claim kinsmanship with the Rajputs on the ground of common Aryan descent. The Maratha Kshatriyas undoubtedly belonged to the north ones, but they assimilated with the people in the Deccan by their long stay and marriage connections and formed a new Maratha race. They were Maratha Kshatriyas, but the Brahmin hierarchy in the Deccan unfortunately looked down upon the Maratha Kshatriyas contemptuously relying on stupid dogmas such as 'नन्दान्तं क्षत्रियकुलम्' or 'कलाबायन्तयोः स्थितिः' and considered them as Shudras, though

they were staunch supporters of Hinduism. The Deccani Brahmins on the other hand praised the Rajputs who considered it an honour to serve the Moghul emperors loyally and give their daughters in marriage to their Muslim overlords and classed them as real Kshatriyas. The brave warriors in the south were naturally obliged to claim Rajput descent for being accepted as true Kshatriyas by the Brahmin hierarchy in the Deccan. The Maratha Kshatriyas have however a special peculiarity. Each family has its own particular totem (देवक) and two families with the same totem cannot inter-marry. Inter-marriages between families of the same gotra is prevented both in the north and in the south. But the Dewak has no existence among the Rajputs but is an important religious factor in addition to Gotra among the Maratha Kshatriyas, who probably adopted it from the original residents of the Deccan-Aborigines, Dravidians or the Nagas. The totem of the Bhonslas is 'Rui-mandar' or 'Panchapallava', while the Shisodiyas do not recognize any such totem. The Pandya, Chol, Keral and Cher kings who were pure and simple Dravidian Kshatriyas claimed also Rajput descent and had ready-made genealogical tables to prove their Rajput descent which they implicitly and honestly believed. The various genealogical tables of the Bhonslas in existence agree with the fact that Babaji was the great grandfather of Shivaji, but the agreement ends there. The founder of the Bhonsla family is Laxmansinha according to the genealogical tables compiled by Chitnavis and according to the Tanjore inscription. Babaji is however the 12th descendant from the founder according to one table and 14th according to the other. The Shisodiyas belonged to the 'Baijwap' Gotra while the Bhonslas called themselves as 'Kaushik-Gotri'. Vidnyaneshwar lays down a general dictum that the Kshatriyas should adopt the Gotra of their preceptors. But this dictum also does not solve the riddle. The hereditary priests of the Bhonslas for generations together belonged to the 'Shakalya' Gotra. The Shisodiyas belong exclusively to the solar clan while the Bhonslas are mentioned as Surya-vanshi, Bramha-vanshi or Som-vanshi in different genealogical tables. It is, therefore, clear that the Bhonslas are not the descendants of the Shisodiyas of Rajputana.

The Bhonslas are Aryan by descent, Maratha Kshatriyas by marriage and Kanarese by long residence in the province of Karnataka. The Poyasalas who ruled for a long time at Dwara-samudra came to the Vijayanagar court when they lost their kingdom. The change from Poyasalas to Bhonslas can be easily explained as the one from Bhoja to Poyasala or Bhonsla. Bhosal, Bhrushabal or Bhavsal is also mentioned in some places as the family-name of the Bhonslas and denotes intermediate stages in the change in the nomenclature. The Nimbalkars lived on the borders of Karnataka and naturally considered the Bhonslas as their equals. But the Jadhavas of Sindkhed considered them as foreigners to a certain extent and hence of a somewhat inferior caste as they lived for a long time further south than themselves. The Bhonslas first established themselves between the banks of the Bhima and the Krishna rivers and owned the villages of Pande-pedgaon, Chambhar-gonde, Vaijapur and others in the vicinity. With the downfall of Vijayanagar a branch of the family moved towards the north and acquired the villages of Daulgaon, Verul, Yavi, Mungi, Hingni, Berdi, while another branch settled at Mudhol. The surnames of the different branches also changed according to events and circumstances, the Mudhol branch becoming Ghorpades.

It is significant that the names of Babaji and Maloji are given as Babgi and Mallugi in the ancient copies of the genealogical tables. Babaji's wife was called Revao, while Maloji's wife was named after marriage as 'Umawwa', though her parents called her Deepabai. 'Aoo' and 'Awwa' are evidently Kanarese terminations for 'Bai' in Marathi. The Bhonslas seem thus to have been more 'Kanarese' than the Nimbalkars even in their homes, though both the families were mixed Maratha Kshatriyas of Aryan descent. At first the family-god of the Bhonslas was 'Shree Shailya Mallikarjun' in the far south, but when they settled in Maharashtra they began to worship other famous shrines in that country and adopted them as their family-deities, instead. Maloji Bhonsla's trusted banker and friend seems to have been a Kanarese—Sheshappa Naik of Shri Gonde. The Bhonslas knew the southern part of Karnataka very intimately and had close associations and friendships in that region. The Marathas

in fairly large numbers had long ago settled in Mysore and Tanjore when the Poyasalas were ruling there, as priests and clerks of the same race as the army, follow in the wake of the soldiery in a newly conquered country. They had of course completely assimilated with the Kanarese people in that tract but preserved their traditions which they brought from Maharashtra. That was the reason which induced Shahaji Raje Bhonsle in later times to carve out an independent kingdom in Karnataka for himself, while he allowed full scope to his valiant son for expanding his power and domains in Maharashtra. Shahaji only repeated the performance of his ancestors and entrenched himself firmly in the land of his adoption. That was how and why Karnataka served as a strong second line of defence to the Marathas under Rajaram when hunted out of Maharashtra by Aurangzeb. The Bhonsla family settled in Nizamshahi and Babaji probably consolidated his position by an economic and hardy life. He seems to have been a successful agriculturist and a village banker as he acquired a number of villages and became fairly rich. He had two sons—Maloji and Vithoji, who were both brave and hardy. Maloji was born in 1552 and when grown up was employed as a Shilledar in the army of Nizam Shah, who transferred his services to Lakhji Jadhava of Sindkhed. He was so strong and stout that no horse could be found to suit him for long service. The family must have been fairly rich and well established, otherwise the Nimbalkar of Phaltan would not have given his daughter in marriage to Maloji. Maloji had no children of his own for a long time though his younger brother Vithoji was blessed with eight sons and so he invoked the blessing of the Mahomedan saint 'Pir Shah Sharif' of Nagar. Shahaji was born in March 1594 and Sharifji two years afterwards. The children were named after the 'Pir' who blessed the grown-up and despondent couple. Vithoji was also enlisted in the Nizam's army as a Shilledar on Maloji's recommendation. The rise of the two brothers was very rapid and they soon occupied important positions in the army. Maloji's son Shahaji was a handsome boy and a precocious child and impressed everyone by his courtly manners and sweet talk. He became a great favourite of Lakhji Jadhavarao and a playmate of his young

daughter Jeejabai who was younger than Shahaji by a couple of years only. Jadhavarao held a durbar in 1599 on Rang-Panchami day and invited a number of prominent Marathas including the two Bhonsle brothers—Maloji and Vithoji. Shahaji, the handsome boy of 5 years of age, also accompanied his father to the durbar which was a jolly good social function. Shahaji and Jeejai who were intimate playmates began to throw red powder (गुलाल) on one another. Jadhavarao was much pleased and asked Jeejai in joke whether she would like to have the young boy Shahaji as her husband, to which she willingly assented. Maloji took the joke rather seriously and requested all those present at the durbar to bear witness to the betrothal promise and ceremony just performed by Jadhavarao. The gathering entirely approved of the match and exclaimed that a better proposal could hardly be conceived. Maloji also supplicated Jadhavarao not to recede from his word of honour so sportingly and spontaneously given in the presence of a large gathering. Jadhavarao and his wife Mhalsabai resented the impertinence of Maloji Bhonsle, because he was of a far lower rank and status than them and also an inferior Kshatriya to boot. They contemptuously spurned at his request and dismissed him from the Sindkhed court in disgrace.

Maloji was very much hurt at this public affront to his honour and enlisted about a thousand soldiers in his private service. He overran Jadhavarao's fief and carried on a guerilla warfare in the Nizamshahi kingdom which was in a tottering condition at that time due to internal factions and dissensions and also to the threatening invasion of the Moghul army. Maloji used this opportunity with great skill and impressed his bravery and power on the prominent functionaries at the Nizamshahi court. He was soon recognized as a brave soldier of fortune and his friendship was solicited. His destiny also came to his help. He found a large buried treasure in his lands near Verul. He repaired the ancient temple of Grishneshvara at Verul and built a spacious reservoir to store water for the use of pilgrims on the Mahadeo hill at Shinganapur. He also gave grants to various temples and freely distributed his wealth among the learned Brahmins. He soon acquired fame for his piety as well as valour and gained public sympathy for his cause. In the six years that

followed the Rang-Panchami durbar incident at Sindkhed, he became so powerful by his various acts that he successfully appealed to the ruler Nizam Shah to act as an intermediary and settle the dispute between him and Jadhavarao. His brother-in-law Vangoji Nimbalkar also rebelled against the State and indirectly helped him. Nizam Shah and his favourite minister Malik Amber supported Maloji's claim, conferred on him the title of 'Raja' and presented him a Jehagir comprising Poona and Supa Taluquas and the two forts of Shivaneri and Chakan. He was also created a 'Pancha-hajari' Mansabdar in 1605 as his power had considerably increased at that time. Jadhavarao was forced to eat the humble pie and the marriage between Shahaji and Jeejabai was celebrated at Deogiri in December 1605 under the royal patronage. Sharifji was also married soon after with Durgabai, daughter of Vishvasrao, a nobleman of Junnar. After marriage Durgabai's name was changed to 'Gangawwa' in her husband's home.

Akbar the great Moghul emperor was at this time straining every nerve to conquer the Muslim kingdoms in the south. The attack was directed firstly against Nizamshahi, as the political affairs in that State were in a condition of chaos. About half a dozen kings ruled at Ahmednagar between 1586 and 1603. Treachery was rampant and murders were at a premium. The gallant Chand Bibi, who was a Nizamshahi princess by birth and a widowed queen of Adilshahi of Bijapur, tried her best to defend Ahmednagar, but she was mercilessly stabbed in 1600 while doing her duty by a Khoja miscreant employed by her political rivals for their selfish ends. Ahmednagar was captured by the Moghuls soon after and the king Bahaddur Shah was captured and imprisoned in the Agra fort. But Mian Raju and Malik Amber set up Murtuza II on the throne at Parinda and wrested back a large portion of the Nizamshahi domains from Khan Khanan, the Moghul General and Viceroy at Ahmednagar. Akbar would have frustrated the efforts of Malik Amber for the revival of Nizamshahi but his son Selim rebelled against him in 1602. As soon as the rebellion was put down his son Daniel died in 1604 and he himself breathed his last in 1605 on account of a malady sprung from grief. Malik Amber thus got an



opportunity of firmly handling the State and solidifying its defence. He removed the capital to the new town of Khadki (Aurangabad in later days) near Daulatabad fort. The marriage of Shahaji was therefore celebrated at Daulatabad and not Ahmednagar during the year 1605. Malik Amber was practically the real ruler of Nizamshahi and Murtuza II was a mere puppet in his hands. Malik Amber and his ward Murtuza Nizamshah were, therefore, very anxious to enlist the active support of the warlike Maratha chieftains. That was the reason which prompted them to settle the dispute between the Jadhavas and the Bhonslas amicably, as both were very brave and able warriors. Maloji was sent on an expedition against the rebels on the Bijapur border and was killed at Indapur while fighting with them in the year 1607. Shahaji was then hardly 13 years of age while his brother Sharifji was still younger. Their uncle Vithoji looked after their interests and their mother Umawwa who was a capable woman encouraged them to follow in the footsteps of their father and shoulder the responsibility of defending the Nizamshahi kingdom from the invasions of the powerful Moghuls, as the king and his able vazier had laid them under a deep debt of gratitude by their noble and generous patronage. Shahaji proved himself equal to the hard task and gallantly defended the Ahmednagar kingdom against all odds for about 30 years after his father's death and thus repaid his father's debt with interest.

## Why did Nizamshahi succumb first?

1640	×	×	<i>End.</i>	×
1636			<i>Murtuza III</i>	
1630		×	<i>Husain III</i>	×
		<i>Mohomod Shah</i>		<i>Shah Jehan</i>
1620		×		
1610	<i>Abdulla Husain</i>		<i>Murtuza II</i>	<i>Jehangir</i>
1600	×		<i>Bahaddur Ibrahim</i>	
1590			<i>Burhan II</i>	
			<i>Ismail</i>	
			<i>Husain II</i>	
1580	<i>Mohomod Kuli</i>	×	<i>Murtuza I</i>	<i>Akbar</i>
		<i>Ibrahim II</i>		
	Kutubshahi of Goalkonda	Adilshahi of Bijapur	Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar	Moghul Emperors of Delhi

## XXII

### MAHARASHTRA-DHARMA

It is a curious phenomenon that both Tukaram and Ramdas were born in the same year. Ramdas was the second son of Suryajipant Thosar, a Brahmin devotee, and was born at Jamb in 1608, on Ramnavami day. His thread ceremony was performed in 1613. His elder brother, Gangadhar, who was born in 1605, was married in 1614, and soon after his father wanted to marry his second son Narayan. But Narayan fled away from home in 1616 and went to Panchavati and took shelter in the temple of Shri Ram. He studied there Veda, Vedanta, Upanishadas, Ramayana, Mahabharat, Bhagwat and the different Gitas with the Pundits of Panchavati. He was very intelligent and knew Sanskrit well. He used to stand for hours together every day in the sacred waters of the river Godavari and observe penance by chanting the thirteen lettered (त्रयोदशाक्षरी) Mantra 'Shriram Jayram Jayjayaram' 'श्रीराम जयराम जयजयराम'. He stayed at Panchavati till 1632, and fulfilled his vow of chanting the Mantra till the figure of 13 crores was reached. He then left Nasik on a pilgrimage, and travelled through the length and breadth of India. He returned to Jamb in 1644 after spending full 12 years in pilgrimage. What he saw and observed in his tour pained him most. 'People were crushed by the Muslim rule. There was dire poverty in the land, and no ray of hope was visible. Hindu women were molested, raped and sold as slaves in far off countries. There was no way of escape from the calamity. Crops failed, and villages were devastated. People fled from their homes in abject misery, and several died of starvation. Everything was taken away and only the country remained. People had no food to eat and no clothes to wear. They had no materials to build their houses. When the low-born become masters, religion comes to an end. Who cares then for the learned Brahmins? Several voluntarily embraced the Muslim faith while others began to worship Muslim Peers (पीर) instead of Hindu deities.'

“बहुसाल कल्पांत लोकांसि आला । महर्गे बहु धाडि केली जनाला ॥  
 किती एक मृत्यासि ते योग्य झाले । किती एक ते देश त्यागोनि गेले ॥  
 किती एक प्रामेन्वि ते वोस झालीं । पिकें सर्व धान्यें च नाना बुडालीं ॥  
 किती गुप्तिणी ब्राह्मणी भ्रष्टवील्या । किती शंभुखी जहाजीं फांकवील्या ॥  
 किती एक देशांतरां त्या विकील्या । किती खुंदरा हाल होऊन मेल्या ॥

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नीच प्राणी गुरुत्व पावला । तेथे आचारवि बुडाला ।  
 वेदशास्त्र ब्राह्मणाला । कोण पुसे ॥  
 किलेक दावलभलकास जाती । किलेक पीरास भजती ।  
 किलेक तुरक होती । आपले इच्छेने ॥  
 पदार्थमात्र तितुका गेला । नुस्ता देशचि उरला ।  
 येणें करतां बहुताला । संकट झाले ॥  
 माणसा खावया अन्न नाही । आंथरण पांथरुण तेहि नाही ।  
 धर करायी सामग्री नाही । काय करिती ॥”

His heart bled for his country and countrymen, and he decided to devote his life for their uplift. He was a learned man and had travelled well. He had taken the vow of celibacy in his early life. According to the old legend he fled actually from the marriage-pandal on hearing the word *सावधान* which calls one to attention. He had no private ties to bind him and hamper his progress. He worked all his life for achieving his ideal. His personality was very attractive. Physically he was a strong man and handsome in appearance. His stirring patriotic appeal tinged with religious fervour soon attracted a large number of enthusiastic young men to his fold. He initiated them in his new cult, and sent them to various parts of the country to found new monasteries of the Ramdasi cult. He now called himself Ramdas, the servant of Rama, and his followers were naturally called by the people Ramdasis. People, however, called him ‘Samartha’, the powerful, and his elder brother Gangadhar who was a married saint and poet as ‘Shreshtha’—the venerable. Ramdas was really a power in the country. He was an optimist in his outlook and his mysticism was of an active and aggressive type (जयिष्णु and not सहिष्णु). He had implicit faith in the regeneration of Hinduism and the Hindu race. Sacrifice (त्याग) was regarded by him as the direct way to salvation (मोक्ष). His selflessness and attachment to the sacred cause made him famous throughout the land. His disciples were recruited from both

sexes, but mainly from the Brahmin class, because he wanted an intelligent group of followers who would devote themselves entirely to the sacred cause, and would willingly sacrifice their lives with all their worldly possessions on the Altar of Hindu religion when the necessity arose. The disciples had to take the vow of a life-long celibacy and sever all connections with their relatives. Only Brahmin widows could enter the new cult on account of these rigorous conditions, for in any case they had to observe celibacy all their lives. The life of a Brahmin widow in those days was a life of continuous service in the interest of her family and devotion to God. She did not want any return for her selfless service.

“महंतें भहंत करावें । युक्ति बुद्धीनें भरावें ।

जाणते करून विखरावें देशोदेशी ॥ ”

‘The head of a monastic order should train his disciples in all arts and knowledge, and when they reached perfection as monks he should send them out to all corners of the country’. Ramdas is accordingly reported to have established about 1,100 monasteries in his life-time throughout the country. Each monastery had a temple of Rama and Hanuman attached to it, along with a good wrestling pit where the youths from the surrounding parts of the country were taught the arts of self-defence. Young men were encouraged to develop their muscles and learn stick, spear and sword practices both as offensive and defensive measures. The monk in charge would give stirring religious discourses every evening to the assembled congregation in front of the temple, and draw their attention to the sad plight of the country and the people and impress on them the necessity of the revival of Hinduism. The river Godavari and the surrounding country was very dear to Ramdas on account of his long stay in early life there. But he shifted his residence further south to the banks of the river Krishna. Probably, he considered it to be a central place for his future religious activities and political arena. Possibly, Shahaji Raje might have invited him to that part of the country. The Ramnavami day was first celebrated in 1645 at Masur which belonged to the Bhonsla fief. The temple of Chafal was erected in 1648, and since then it became the headquarters of the Ramdasi cult, and the Ramnavami day was regularly

celebrated at Chafal from 1648 onwards with one solitary exception. The first 11 monasteries along with Hanuman temples were erected at Chafal, Shinganwadi, Majgaon, Umbaraj, Masur, Shahapur, Bahegaon, Shirale, Pargaon, Manpada'e, and Borgaon all of them being situated on the road from Wai to Parhala. As stated in 'Samartha-pratap' his principal disciples and monks were stationed in Karnataka, Konkan, Guzeratha, Nagpur, Gomantaka, Tailangana, Malyal, Odyia, Gokarna, Rameshvara, Somnatha, Dwarka, Puri, Ujjain, Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura and Badrikedar. This speaks volumes for his organizing abilities and the all-pervading nature of his sampradaya.

Ramdas firmly believed that no real religion could be practised by the people when they were ruled by kings of the other faith. No religion was worth its name when its followers were slaves in their own homes. Those who failed to prosper in this simple material life deserved a still greater failure in the higher spiritual life. Those who lead a cursed life in this existence would certainly lead a still worse life in the new world after death. He emphasized the importance of worldly life (प्रपंच करावा नेमका, प्रपंच करावा नेटका). A man should pay attention to 'Prapancha' first and then 'Paramartha' will follow of itself.

He told the people to work hard for their emancipation and emphasized the importance of work (यत्न) against prayers (भजन).

“यत्नाचा लोक भाग्याचा । यत्नेविण दरिद्रता ।  
भाग्यासी काय उणे रे । यत्नावांचूनि राहिले ॥  
वन्ही तो चेतवावा रे । चेतवितांचि चेततो ।  
केल्यानें होत आहे रे । आधी केलेंच पाहिजे ॥  
यत्न तो देव जाणावा । अंतरीं धरितां बरे ।”

“A man who works hard is fortunate. One who makes no efforts remains in abject poverty. The fire should be kindled. It bursts into flame when once kindled. One succeeds by doing, but one must do it first. Effort should be regarded as God, and held near the heart.” He had no blind faith in destiny. If a man would but work hard in the proper direction he would surely be God, because man was after all an image of God. The divine qualities exist in the heart of every man, only they are in a dormant condition. It is the sacred duty of man to realise this fact and awaken the dormant divinity in him, and it is sure

to manifest itself for the good of the country and the people. That which is good for the people is religion (धर्मो धारयते प्रजा).

Ramdas was certainly a Vaishnavite saint. Vaishnavism in the north took the form of the worship of Krishna, and sometimes degenerated into morbid amorous sex philosophy, where Shrikrishna was often depicted as making violent love to the Gopis—the milk-maidens and leading a free sexual life with them. Vaishnavism in the Dravidian lands was often based on philosophical differences between the Advaitism of Shankaracharya and the Dwaitism of Ramanujacharya or the specific Dwaitism of Madhwacharya. The cult of Vaishnavism remained mostly confined to the higher classes of society in Dravidian countries, and did not much permeate to the lower strata. Vaishnavism in Maharashtra, however, became very popular with the masses as God was not regarded as a distant superhuman divinity, but as a familiar philosopher, friend and guide. Devotees considered him as one of them, and always addressed him in the singular. Vishnoo in the north assumed the role of a husband—at times that of an intensely sex-minded husband, while in the south he assumed the role of a disciplinarian father, but in Maharashtra he was an elder brother who was both a friendly guide and a playmate. The devotee in the north acted the part of a faithful and loving wife while in the south he thought himself to be a dutiful and obedient son who was at times afraid of his father. An elder brother of almost the same age as the younger one can be easily approached rather than the passionate husband or the stern-looking father. Panduranga, Vithoba or Vitthal was the Vaishnavite idol in Maharashtra, and represented brotherly love and friendship among the Bhagwat Bhaktas. But Rama was also an incarnation of Vishnoo, and Ramdas only preached the worship of Rama instead of that of Vithoba, the base remaining the same.

“पुण्यक्षेत्रे ती मोडावी । आणि ब्राम्हण्ये पीडावी ॥

पुण्यवंत ते मरावे । पापी चिरंजीव व्हावे ॥

लोक भेणेचि चालती । त्यांस होतात विपत्ती ॥

धर्मवृत्ति हे बुडावी । शास्त्रमर्यादा सांडावी ॥

रामदास म्हणे देवें । बौध्य होऊन बैसावें ॥”

Ramdas says :—"It is a pity that holy places should be destroyed and Brahmins persecuted. Good men should die, and sinners should become immortal. Those who walk in righteous fear should suffer afflictions. The religious frame of mind should be lost and religious limitations destroyed. And still God should remain unmoved like Buddha." This is surely a covert taunt to the followers of Bhagwat-dharma and their principal passive deity of Pandharpur. Even Eknath realised this weak point in Bhagwat-dharma as being an imitation of Buddhism, fifty years before the date of Ramdas. He says :—

“ दार उघड बया । पार उघड ॥ धृ ॥  
 बौद्ध अवतार घेऊन । विटे समचरण ठेवून ॥  
 पुंडलीक दिवटा पाहून । तथाचें द्वारी गोंधळ मांडिला ॥  
 आषाढी कार्तिकी गोंधळ मांडिला । उदो उदो शब्दजाला ॥  
 कामक्रोधादिकां पळ सुटला । उदो उदो ऐकोनी बया ॥ ”

“Oh mother ! Open the door. God took the incarnation of Buddha, put both his legs on a brick, and called his devotees to sing and dance in the torchlight shown by Pundalika in front of his own door on Ashadhi and Kartiki days. On hearing the opening words of that Gondhal passions fled away”—This quotation is from a hymn written by Eknath in honour of the Goddess Bhawany. It clearly shows that Vithoba was regarded almost as an incarnation of Buddha. Vithoba was an emblem of peace and love. These great qualities certainly raise mankind to a higher spiritual plane. They cement unity among the people, but they are after-all passive virtues. They do not goad a nation to activity and there can be no prosperity and power without active work and effort. They foster the brotherhood of man but they cannot liberate the people from bondage. They cannot destroy the foreign yoke. The cult of Bhagwat-dharma had fulfilled its mission. People belonging to various castes and sub-castes in Maharashtra became united. A common bond of fellowship was created by the worship of Vitthal among all the Hindus in Maharashtra. But were the Muslim rulers and their kinsmen affected by Bhagwat-dharma ? The effect, if any, was superficial and almost negligible. The Muslims though fewer in numbers than the Hindus remained the rulers of India and the Hindus remained slaves in their own homes. In spite of their



spiritual elevation they were oppressed, and had to face innumerable and untold miseries. Hinduism was losing ground every day. It had reached the brink of a precipice, and it was feared that it would collapse any day, and be lost to the world.

So Ramdas preached "Let the Hindus awaken and worship Rama, instead of Vithoba". The cruel demon Ravan was the ruler of a small island called Lanka. But he invaded, and subdued India and held the 33 crores of Hindu Gods in bondage. Rama killed Ravan and liberated the Gods from prison and gave freedom to India. Why should not then the Hindus follow in Rama's footsteps? If they worshipped Rama and followed his glorious example, they would be happy and victorious. Maharashtra would be free from foreign yoke, and Hinduism would prosper. Hanuman also should be worshipped. He was the loyal servant of Rama, and was 'prowess' incarnate. It was mainly due to the strength of his arms that Rama could conquer Ravan and kill him. Let the Hindu youths in Maharashtra follow his ideal and cultivate his strength. It would be useful in driving out our national enemies. Even Rama said to Anjani, Hanuman's mother, after bowing down to her with his brothers :

“तुझ्या कुमरें आम्हां थोर । उपकार केला ॥

माते तुझ्या उदरीं जाण । हनुमान जन्मला रत्न ॥

एवढें माझें रामायण । त्याचेनी योगें ॥”

“Your son has rendered us all under great obligations. Oh Mother, Hanuman whom you gave birth is a real jewel. My Ramayana is entirely due to his valour.” Let Hindus also worship the great goddess Kalika Bhawani who is strength personified, in fact, deified. She blessed Rama, and gave him strength to kill the demons. She herself killed several demons in the past. But we would not be content with these ancient legends. We want tangible and immediate proofs of her power and greatness.

“दुष्ट संहारिलें मागे । ऐसें उदंड ऐकितो ॥

परंतु रोखडें कांही । मूळ सामर्थ्य दाखवी ॥”

If the Hindus who were united by the teachings of the great saints during the last three hundred years, followed this cult of the worship of Rama, Hanuman and Devi Bhawani, they would be free in no time.

“देवद्रोही तितुके कुते । मारोनि धालावे परैते ॥  
 देवदास पावती फत्ते । यदर्थी संशय नाही ॥  
 देव मस्तकीं धरावा । अवधा हलकल्लोल करावा ॥  
 मुलुख बुडवावा कीं बडवावा । धर्मस्थापनेसाठी ॥  
 मारितां मारितां मरावें । तेणें गतीस पावावें ॥  
 फिरोनि येतां मोगावें । महद्भाग्य ॥  
 मराठा तितुका मेलवावा । आपुला महाराष्ट्रधर्म वाढवावा ॥  
 येविषयीं न करितां तकवा । पूर्वज हासती ॥”

“Those dogs of traitors should be whipped and driven out of the land. There is not the least doubt that the servants of God will win in the end. God should be held on the head with respect, and a fierce struggle begun. The land should either be drowned or trodden upon for the establishment of religion. One should die while killing his enemies, and attain salvation and enjoy great glory on rebirth. All Marathas should be united in one common fold, and so we should expand our Maharashtra-dharma. If we do not make efforts in this direction our ancestors will laugh at us.” These strong words were vented not so much against the Muslims in the south as against the anti-Hindu Mahomedans in the north led by the fanatic emperor Aurangzeb. The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims in the south were cordial to some extent, as the majority of the Mahomedans in the south were Hindu converts, and naturally showed tolerance towards their old brethren in faith and their customs and manners, as they both once belonged to the same common stock, and their interests too, though antagonistic in certain religious and political practices, were identical as far as the enmity of the north was concerned. But with the growth of Mahomedan power in the north, the Moghul emperors and their Mahomedan followers began to consider themselves as more closely allied to the foreigners—Afghans, Persians and Arabs—than to the Hindus. They looked on India not as their home or motherland, but as a mere possession of which they had become owners by conquest. Akbar tried his best to infuse a new spirit in the Delhi Government, but his religious toleration and broad and liberal outlook did not long survive him. Jehangir was engrossed in pleasures and he did not find time in upsetting the policy of his illustrious father. But his son Shah Jehan, though a wise ruler, was a

bigoted Muslim, and was often a tool in the hands of the Mullas and the Moulvis. The bigotry of Shah Jehan developed in course of time into fanaticism when Aurangzeb ascended the throne. In fact, Aurangzeb was often compared with Ravan by Ramdas. It was, therefore, no wonder that Ramdas should speak in such bitter terms against the Muslim rulers and their followers who prided themselves on being persecutors of Hinduism. The invectives hurled were more against the tyranny practised than against the community which practised it. It was in short a revolt against oppression and persecution.

“सामर्थ्य आहे चळवळी चें । जो जो करील त्या चें ।

परंतु तेथें भगवंताचें । अधिष्ठान पाहिजे ॥”

“Every movement has power. One who joins it will succeed, provided he obtained first the blessings of God. We must try our best and put full faith in God. We need not hanker after the fruit of our labours. God is sure to grant it. We need not be afraid. No one in the entire world can do any harm to a servant of God or Samarth (Ramdas).”

‘समर्थाचिया सेवका वक्र पाहे । असा सर्व भूमंडळां कोण आहे ? ॥’

God is always near us (सदा सर्वदा देव सान्निध्य आहे) and it is by his support that a brave man does wonderful and difficult deeds of valour (उदंड खस्तीची कामें । मर्द मारुनि जातसे ॥). This aggressive form of Vaishnavism as preached by Ramdas is known as Maharashtra-dharma. Its passive form as manifested in the teachings of the 100 and odd great saints from Dnyaneshvar to Tukaram is Bhagwat-dharma. When Bhagwat-dharma was at its height of glory, and Tukaram was preaching the gospel of love, peace and spiritual contentment, Ramdas who was his contemporary preached to the united Maratha nation the worship of Rama, Bhawany and Hanuman, and goaded them to drive out the foreign Muslim rulers from the country and liberate the Hindus from bondage and save Hinduism from extinction and death, by imitating the examples of Rama and Hanuman. The Marathas became practical politicians by the teachings of the great saints. They moved cautiously at every step. They subordinated politics to religion.

“ पहिलें तें हरिकथानिरूपण । दुसरें तें राजकारण  
सिसरें तें सावधपण । सर्व विषयी ॥ ”

They were neither afraid of a defeat nor ashamed of it. A defeat was considered by them as an opportunity for another more cautious and courageous effort. They knew that the Mahomedan power was firmly rooted in the land, and a continued cautious effort would only be able to uproot it.

\* “ म्लेंच्छ दुर्जन उदंड । बहुतां दिवसांचें माजलें बंड  
या कारणे अखंड । सावधान असावें ॥  
महा यत्न सावधपणें । समयी धारिष्ट धरणें  
अद्भुतची कार्य करणें । देणें ईश्वराचें ॥ ”

They never despaired, and therefore unlike the Rajputs they never burnt their women and children on the eve of a defeat. They did not consider it a sin to run away from the battlefield with a determination of meeting the enemy again at a more favourable opportunity. They knew that the world was full of miseries and happiness was a rare commodity in life, and hence they were undaunted by a defeat. This cautiousness as constantly emphasized by Ramdas was the root-cause of the guerilla warfare which they so successfully practised against the Mahomedans. They saw and knew full well that they stood no comparison to the heavily built and brave Mahomedan soldiers. But they also knew that the little monkeys, when blessed by the God Ramchandra, defeated and killed the mighty demons under the leadership of Ravana, because the monkeys stood for a just and righteous cause. The Marathas were very simple, and their wants were few. Poverty was familiar to them, and luxury was unknown. They had nothing to lose and everything to gain by the wars. This practical aspect of life gave them great courage. They were ill-clad, ill-fed and ill-equipped, but they felt that they were not in a worse plight than the monkeys who formed the victorious army of Ramchandra.

The principal work of Ramdas is 'Dasbodha'. It is divided into 20 chapters (Dashakas), each chapter being further subdivided into 10 sections (Samasas). This clearly shows the methodical nature of the saint. Dasbodha is a compendium of rules of behaviour in both private and public life, and also for the general welfare of man both in this world as well as the next.

Probably Dasbodha in its early stage contained 7 chapters only, but it was revised and enlarged by the poet himself at some later date in the light of his experience. The words

‘सरली शब्दांची खटपट । आला ग्रंथाचा शेवट ।’

occurring at the end of the 7th chapter clearly point to this conclusion. Dasbodha is rightly considered as one of the four principal Marathi Vedas, the other three being Dnyaneshvari, Eknathi Bhagwat and Tukaram Gatha. Dasbodha can aptly be described as a work on ‘Karmayoga’ (salvation through duty) and its author as a great ‘Karmayogi’.

But a student of Maratha history will find Ramdas at his best in his other miscellaneous writings. His Ramayana is full of vigour and rhetoric. Specially, the ‘Yuddha Kanda’ is full of passionate appeal and glorifies the war waged by Rama against Ravan for a righteous and just cause. It was a Dharma-yuddha which absolves one from the sin of human slaughter involved in the war. The hymns written by him in praise of the goddess Bhawany and Maruty are rhetorical and extremely passionate and capable of awakening a dead and inert nation to activity, struggle and freedom. His miscellaneous poetical writings afford ample materials also for a historian in interpreting the contemporary history of Maharashtra from a correct view-point. For, Ramdas was not a mystic recluse. He was a practical saint and a political philosopher.

Ramdas was about 22 years older than Shivaji Maharaj, his famous disciple, and slightly younger than Shahaji Bhonsla. Chafal in Satara District was the central seat of Ramdasi cult, and Masur in the vicinity of Chafal was in Shahaji’s possession. It is probable that these two contemporary great men might have met each other and exchanged their ideas about the emancipation of Hindus in Maharashtra and the upheaval of Hinduism. Shahaji visited Nasik and Trimbak in 1631 when Ramdas had already made his mark as a young Brambachari saint who was doing penance there for the uplift of Hinduism. In 1639, Shahaji took his wife Jijabai and son Shivaji with him to Karnataka. They remained there till 1642. Ramdas went on pilgrimage to the south about that time, and might have visited Shahaji’s court on the way to or from Rameshwar and made his first acquaintance

with Shivaji and his mother. Ramdas visited the shrine of Rameshwar on three different occasions. Vyankoji became his disciple in 1655 in one of these visits to Bangalore. But the preaching of Maharashtra-dharma did not certainly fall on deaf ears as latter events clearly show. People in Maharashtra awakened by the teachings of Ramdas firmly believed that their day of liberation had drawn near, and God would soon appear in Maharashtra in some incarnation worthy of the occasion. The Goddess Kalika Bhawany would assume the form of an invincible sword in his hand, and he would win freedom for Hinduism and the Hindu Gods by following in the footsteps of Rama. The new incarnation would combine both Siva and Vishnool in his person, and would drive out the Muslims from the land and soon establish a Hindu Raj instead. As Siva he would destroy the enemies, and as Vishnool he would protect the followers and devotees of Hinduism.

Maharashtra-dharma as preached by Ramdas supplied the cement, and brought about the unification of the Maratha power which already existed at the commencement of the 17th century, but was scattered in small centres all over the Deccan. The Maharashtra stage was thus set for the exploits of the great warrior, Raje Shahaji Bhonsle and his far more illustrious son Shri Chhatrapati Shiwaji Maharaj who ultimately succeeded in liberating Maharashtra from the foreign Muslim yoke and establishing an independent Maratha Raj in the country. In the words of the great king himself: 'it was not his kingdom but it belonged to Hinduism' (हैं राज्य शिवाजी चें नव्हे—राज्य धर्माचें आहे). It was a kingdom where cows were protected and Brahmins could follow their learned calling in an uninterrupted manner (गोब्राम्हणाचें राज्य—उदंड जाहलें पाणी खानसंध्या करावया). It was a Hindu Swaraj (हिंदवी स्वराज्य) and the great king was merely the protector of Hinduism as represented by cows and Brahmins (गोब्राम्हण प्रतिपालक). He did not consider himself to be a king, but a Sanyasi in the service of Hinduism (धर्मासाठी आम्ही फकीरी घेतली आहे), which was the faith of his ancestors and which was dearer to him than life itself.

## CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF IMPORTANT EVENTS AND MEN

- 6000–4000 B.C. Sumerian movements throughout India  
(Before Christ)
- 4000 B.C. .. Aryans come to India. Rigveda
- 4000–2000 B.C. Aryans spread eastwards from the Punjab.  
Nagas cross the Vindhya
- 1800 B.C. .. Ramayan war
- 1400 B.C. .. Mahabharat war. Birth of Shrikrishna
- 1400–800 B.C. Upanishadhas, Vedangjyotisha, Bhagwat-gita
- 800 B.C. .. Vyas, Panini wrote Jaya and Ashtadhyayi
- 600 B.C. .. Goutam Budha, Mahavira
- 800–500 B.C. .. Aryans cross the Vindhyas
- 400 B.C. .. Parsuram lands on the Konkan coast
- 350 B.C. .. Mahabharat was written as known to us to-day.
- 327 B.C. .. Alexander's invasion of India
- 322 B.C. .. Nandas were exterminated
- 312 B.C. .. Chandragupta defeats the Greeks and marries  
with a Greek princess
- 273 B.C. .. Asoka
- 150 B.C. .. Patanjali and Manusmriti. Nagarjun
- 100 B.C. .. Present Ramayana was written
- 56 B.C. .. Vikram establishes his 'Samvat' at Ujjain
- Christian era .. Jesus Christ
- 78 A.C. .. Shaliwahan establishes his 'Saka' era  
(After Christ)
- 125 A.C. .. 'Sakas' driven out from Maharashtra
- 200–300 A.C. Vishnoo Smriti, Yadnyavalkya
- 495 A.C. .. Varah-Mihir
- 611–642 A.C. Ajantha caves. Chalukya kings. Mohomod  
Paigambar, 'Hijari' era (622)
- 636 A.C. .. Persia conquered and converted to Islam
- 664 A.C. .. Afghanistan conquered and converted to Islam
- 712 A.C. .. Sindh conquered and converted to Islam

- 710-750 A.C. \* Gharapuri and Verul caves. Rashtrakuta kings.  
Arabs conquer 'Sind'
- 788-820 A.C. Shri Shankaracharya
- 985-1030 A.C. Chol kings build temples. Conquest of Pegu.  
Mohomod Gizni invades India
- 1100-1150 A.C. Deshi Bhashas attain importance. Vidya-  
neshvar, Bhaskaracharya
- 1160 A.C. .. Pundalika, Basava (Lingayat sect)
- 1188 A.C. .. Mukundraja writes Viveka-Sindhu
- 1193 A.C. .. Prithviraja Chavan was defeated and killed and  
Mohomod Ghori became Sultan of Delhi
- 1210 A.C. .. Kutub-minar. Sinharaja Yadava
- 1272 A.C. .. Chakradhara (Mahanubhao sect)
- 1290 A.C. .. Dnyaneshvari
- 1295 A.C. .. Alauddin Khilji invades the Deccan
- 1310 A.C. .. Poyasal Ballal kings of Karnataka were con-  
quered
- 1318 A.C. .. Deogiri captured. Yadava king beheaded
- 1326 A.C. .. Varangala Kingdom came to an end
- 1337 A.C. .. Vijayanagara
- 1347 A.C. .. Bahmani Kingdom founded. Mohomod Tugh-  
lakh reigns at Delhi
- 1350 A.C. .. Namadeva. Madhavacharya
- 1380 A.C. .. Sayanacharya
- 1398 A.C. .. Timur invaded India
- 1410 A.C. .. Kabir
- 1450 A.C. .. Mohomod Gowan
- 1468-1475 A.C. Durgadi, Damajipant
- 1490 A.C. .. Guru Nanak (founder of Sikh religion). Vasco-  
de Gama lands in India. Bahmani Kingdom  
disrupted
- 1500 A.C. .. Chaitanya or Gouranga
- 1510 A.C. .. Goan captured by the Portuguese
- 1526 A.C. .. Babar, the first Moghul emperor of Delhi
- 1556 A.C. .. Akbar ascends the throne
- 1565 A.C. .. Battle of Talikote
- 1580 A.C. .. Tulsidasa, Eknath



- 1585 A.C. .. The Bhonsla family gradually begins to raise its head
- 1594 A.C. .. Birth of Shahaji
- 1599 A.C. .. Maloji slighted by Jadhavarao
- 1600 A.C. .. Chand Bibi murdered. Ahmednagar captured
- 1604 A.C. .. Maloji becomes a 'Raja' and 'Pancha Hajari' Mansabdar of Nizamshahi
- 1605 A.C. .. Akbar dies. Shahaji married to Jeejabai
- 1607 A.C. .. Maloji died on battlefield at Indapur
- 1608 A.C. .. Tukarama and Ramdasa

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३२. काव्येतिहाससंग्रह—साने.
३३. इतिहाससंग्रह—पारसनीस.
३४. बखरी, कैफियती व यादी, सनदापत्रे.
३५. भा. इ. सं. मंडल—त्रैमासिक, संशोधक—राजवाडे मंदिर, रामदास व रामदासी, विविधज्ञानविस्तार प्रभृति भासिकें व त्रैमासिकें.







